PERSONAL TRAITS OF

BRITISH AUTHORS

HOOD—MACAULAY—SYDNEY SMITH
JERROLD—DICKENS—CHARLOTTE
BRONTË—THACKERAY

EDITED BY

EDWARD T. MASON

WITH PORTRAITS

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1885

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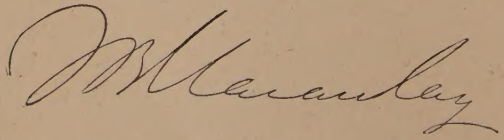

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PREFACE.

THIS is the last volume of this series. Few persons would be likely to agree about the names which ought to appear in such a work, and most readers will miss some of their favorites. There are, however, two names, the omission of which will be especially noticed—those of Thomas Carlyle and of George Eliot. The original plan of including them in this final volume was reluctantly abandoned, because the available material concerning one was too recent and concerning the other too scanty to warrant the attempt. Much, indeed, has been published about them, during the past few years; yet the information essential to an adequate knowledge of their characters is still lacking.

Let us see what some of these men were doing at a time when most of them were actively at work. We will take the year 1822, as the time most favorable for such a view. In the previous year, De Quincey had published his "Confessions," and Keats had died in Rome; and now Shelley was about to

die. Leigh Hunt, in an ill-starred hour, arrived in Pisa, and joined Shelley and Byron in the publication of the *Liberal.* Byron was writing his last poems, and would ere long embark upon the fatal expedition to Greece. Rogers, already an old man, had just published the first part of "Italy." Landor was in Florence, writing "Imaginary Conversations," quarrelling with publishers, and stirring up strife in his wonted way. Southey lived peacefully at Keswick, working none the less diligently because of his pension and his Laureateship. Hazlitt, half-crazed by passion, was wearying all his friends with the praises of that comely servant girl whom he afterward celebrated in "Liber Amoris." For several years Coleridge had been the guest of the friendly Gillmans; no more "Ancient Mariners" or "Christabels" now; but wonderful outpourings of talk as he wandered about the little garden at Highgate. Wordsworth, past his fiftieth year, had practically finished his work; his admirers were still few, and he had long to wait for the full recognition, which came to him before his death. Jeffrey, a few years younger than Wordsworth, was still editing the *Edinburgh Review.* Walter Scott, Esquire, had but recently become Sir Walter, and was in the prime of life, and at the very height of his dazzling success. "Christopher North" had exchanged his sporting-jacket for an academic gown, and was Pro-

fessor of Moral Philosophy in the Edinburgh University. Macaulay was still at Cambridge. Sydney Smith had not yet left his Yorkshire parish. There also lived in Yorkshire a delicate child, six years old; a tiny, precocious girl, who would one day depict the harsh and gloomy surroundings of her infancy in the pages of "Jane Eyre." In 1822, five humorists, unknown to each other—three of them still unknown to the world—were toiling at very different tasks in the same great city. In that year Thomas Hood was sub-editor of the magazine to which Charles Lamb was contributing the "Essays of Elia;" and while the youthful Jerrold set types, studied languages, and wrote melodramas for the minor theatres, a neglected boy, ten years of age, sat washing bottles in a blacking manufactory—a boy, who within a few years was to tell the story of "David Copperfield." One other boy, soon to become the comrade and fellow-laborer of Hood, Jerrold, and Dickens—and destined to excel them all—pored over his books in the Charter-House School; for it was there that Thackeray was fitting himself to enter Cambridge.

Hawthorne's "Note-books" of foreign travel, and "Our Old Home," have been found particularly useful and suggestive. The power of close and delicate observation, which characterizes all of Hawthorne's work, pervades these volumes, giving them an abid-

ing charm. Extracts have been made from the following American copyrighted books: Maunsell B. Field's "Memories of Many Men" (Harper & Brothers, New York, 1874); Frances Anne Kemble's "Records of a Girlhood" (Henry Holt & Co., New York, 1879); Nathaniel Hawthorne's "Passages from English Note-books," 2 vols. (Fields, Osgood, & Co., Boston, 1870); James T. Fields's "Yesterdays with Authors" (J. R. Osgood & Co., Boston, 1872); R. Shelton Mackenzie's "Life of Dickens" (Philadelphia, 1870); George Ticknor's "Life, Letters, and Journals," 2 vols. (Houghton, Mifflin & Co., Boston, 1876); W. B. Reed's "Haud Immemor," privately printed (Philadelphia, 1864); the *Atlantic Monthly* (Houghton, Mifflin & Co., Boston); *Appletons' Journal* (D. Appleton & Co., New York); *Harper's Magazine* (Harper & Brothers, New York); *Lippincott's Magazine* (J. B. Lippincott & Co., Philadelphia). Permission was kindly granted to make selections from these works, and the courtesy of their respective owners is thankfully acknowledged.

I heartily thank those who have helped me by counsel and by criticism. Their patient, good-humored fidelity has been unfailing. To these friends, whose modesty would shrink from public mention of their names, I own my pleasant debt for kindness in the past; to them I give my pledge of good-fellowship in the days to come.

CHRONOLOGY.

Born.		Died.
1771.	Sydney Smith.	1845.
1799.	Hood.	1845.
1800.	Macaulay.	1859.
1803.	Jerrold.	1857.
1811.	Thackeray.	1863.
1812.	Dickens.	1870.
1816.	Charlotte Brontë.	1855.

THOMAS HOOD.

1799–1845.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

IN the story of Hood there are no dark places which the friendly biographer must leave unnoticed, or gloss over as best he may; no dubious actions to be accounted for by "temperamental causes;" no vices to be referred to "inherited tendencies." Few men stand less in need of apologies than he does.

His character is a most effective protest against the theory that genius exempts its possessor from the obligations which bind ordinary men, giving him license to covet and to appropriate the goods of his neighbor, and to make himself variedly obnoxious to those around him. Here was a man, endowed with gifts of the highest order, delicate, sensitive, keenly alive to every impression of pleasure or of pain, yet living a life of unobtrusive heroism; and, under most trying circumstances, practising the homely, every-day virtues; as faithful in the performance of social and domestic duties as though he had been the most mildly prosaic country gentleman who ever dozed through a life of tranquil prosperity.

He was free from egotism. His own pains and troubles were the last things he thought of bringing

forward for public or private notice. Under such trials as his, despondency would have seemed only natural, and much complaining would have been excusable; but he showed a brave front to the world, hid his sorrows in his own heart, and uttered no lamentations, no moans of self-commiseration. His fine temper was not easily ruffled; but on just occasion he could prove himself a formidable adversary. Notwithstanding his modesty and his peaceable disposition, he was a dangerous man to trifle with when his self-respect was concerned; and no one ever assailed him on this ground without finding cause for regret. Anything approaching patronage or intrusion upon his private affairs—still more, any meddlesome attempts to pry into his motives, or to impugn his personal character, were sure to be repelled promptly, and in a way not to be forgotten. To see with what spirit he resented and rebuked such offences, read his letter to the fanatical woman, who presumed to sit in judgment upon him for the frivolity of his writings.[1]

In one of the most pleasant of the "Roundabout Papers," Thackeray writes: "'To make laugh is my calling,' says he; 'I must jump, I must grin, I must tumble, I must turn language head over heels, and leap through grammar;' and he goes to his work humbly and courageously, and what he has to do that does he with all his might, through sickness, through sorrow, through exile, poverty, fever, depression—there he is, always ready to his work, and with a jewel of genius in his pocket! Why, when

[1] See p. 27.

he laid down his puns and pranks, put the motley off, and spoke out of his heart, all England and America listened with tears and wonder! Other men have delusions of conceit, and fancy themselves greater than they are, and that the world slights them. Have we not heard how Liston always thought he ought to play *Hamlet?* Here is a man with a power to touch the heart almost unequalled, and he passes days and years in writing 'Young Ben he was a nice young man,' and so forth. To say truth, I have been reading in a book of 'Hood's Own' until I am perfectly angry. 'You great man, you good man, you true genius and poet,' I cry out, as I turn page after page. 'Do, do, make no more of these jokes, but be yourself, and take your station.'"

So far as was possible, he did "take his station." It must be remembered that he worked for his daily bread, and that it was his misfortune to address a public, which, prizing him only as a jester, undervalued and neglected his higher work, just as it had, a few years before, undervalued and neglected the opening genius of Keats. Yet, notwithstanding manifold discouragements, and while enduring the hardships of poverty and the pangs of a mortal disease, he produced works which entitle him to rank among the foremost poets of this century. In our own day his claims have at last been fully recognized. Acute and carefully discriminating critics, differing widely in their views of art and in their canons of criticism, unite in doing him honor. The endurance of his fame is confidently predicted by Mr. Stedman in "Victorian Poets"—a work already

an accepted authority, and a classic in the field of literary history and criticism ; and Mr. W. M. Rossetti says, "On the whole, we can pronounce him the finest English poet between the generation of Shelley and the generation of Tennyson."

Bearing in mind Hood's lifelong suffering from an incurable disease, what impresses one most strongly is the thoroughly healthful and cheerful condition of his mind. His life is full of illustrations of this : he found time to be the playfellow of his children, and to devise games, and make quaintly ingenious toys, for their amusement ; when suddenly attacked by a hemorrhage, which threatened to prove speedily fatal, he was the one to give all necessary instructions, and even to provide for the comfort of the physician, hastily summoned to attend him ; and when, in his last hours, some friends came to see him, and to say good-by, the dying man cheered them with pleasant talk, and made them drink a glass of wine with him, "that he might know them for friends, as of old, and not for undertakers." There was no levity, no bravado, in this wise and beautiful act. It was but one more expression of his unselfish, cordial nature, one more proof of the simplicity and the sanity of his faith ; and it was nowise inconsistent with those solemn words, which he murmured as the end drew near—"O Lord, say, Arise, take up thy cross, and follow Me!"

The memoir prepared by Hood's son and daughter is the chief authority. Valuable matter will also be found in Dilke's "Papers of a Critic ;" J. R. Planché's "Recollections ;" and S. C. Hall's "Book of Memories."

LEADING EVENTS OF HOOD'S LIFE.

1799. Born, May 23d, in London.
1814 (?).—(Aged 15.) Apprenticed to a wood engraver.
1821.—(Aged 22.) Sub-editor of the *London Magazine.*
1824.—(Aged 25.) Marries Miss Reynolds.
1826.—(Aged 27.) Publishes the first series of "Whims and Oddities."
1827.—(Aged 28.) Publishes "The Plea of the Midsummer Fairies."
1829.—(Aged 30.) Publishes "The Dream of Eugene Aram."
1834.—(Aged 35.) Publishes "Tylney Hall."
1835.—(Aged 36.) Goes to Germany with his family.
1839.—(Aged 40.) Publishes "Up the Rhine."
1840.—(Aged 41.) Returns to England.
1841.—(Aged 42.) Edits the *New Monthly Magazine.*
1843.—(Aged 44.) Publishes "The Song of the Shirt," in *Punch.*
1844.—(Aged 45.) Edits *Hood's Magazine.* A pension of one hundred pounds per annum is conferred upon his wife.
1845.—(Aged 45 years and 11 months.) Dies, May 3d.

THOMAS HOOD.

ONE who knew him in his childhood described him to me as a singular child—silent and retired—with much quiet humor, and apparently delicate health. I know another friend of his youth, . . . who told me much of the "earlier ways" of the boy-poet; that when a mere boy he was continually making shrewd and pointed remarks upon topics on which he was presumed to know nothing; that while he seemed a heedless listener, out would come some observation which showed he had taken in all that had been said.—S. C. HALL ("Book of Memories").[1]

Childhood.

In person Hood was of middle height, slender and sickly-looking, of sallow complexion and plain features, quiet in expression, and very rarely excited, so as to give indication of either the pathos or the humor that must ever have been working in his soul. His was, indeed, a countenance rather of melancholy than of mirth: there was something calm, even to solemnity, in the upper portion of the face, seldom relieved in society, by the eloquent

Personal appearance.

[1] Hall (Samuel Carter). A Book of Memories of Great Men and Women of the Age. 4to. London, 1876.

play of the mouth, or the sparkle of an observant eye.—S. C. HALL ("Book of Memories").

Appearance, manner, and conversation.

The first and (to my regret) the only time I ever was in company with Thomas Hood, occurred one evening at the house of a mutual friend, residing at Walworth. As he entered the room my first impression was that of slight disappointment. I had not then seen any portrait of him, and my imagination had depicted a man of the under size, with a humorous and mobile mouth, and with sharp, twinkling, and investigating eyes. When, therefore, a rather tall and attenuated figure presented itself before me, with grave aspect and dressed in black ; and after, when scrutinizing his features I noticed those dark, sad eyes, set in that pale and pain-worn, yet tranquil face, and saw the expression of that suffering mouth, telling how sickness, with its stern plough, had driven its silent share through that slender frame, all the long train of quaint and curious fancies, and ludicrous imageries . . . came before me like the rushing event of a dream, and I asked myself, "Can this be the man that has so often made me roll with laughter at his humor?" . . . When he began to converse in bland and placid tones about Germany . . . I became more reconciled to him, and afterwards as we were looking over some prints, and were comparing and bandying tastes and opinions, I felt the full force of his many-sided talent ; for not only did he talk of art with a refined gusto, but even here his extraordinary talent for ludicrous combination was constantly weaving in with his remarks. He punned (as it seemed) uncon-

sciously, certainly without premeditation, for it was extemporaneous—literally extemporaneous—it was instantaneous. It was not then his cue, and he could have had no inducement that evening to give us a "taste of his quality," for I heard afterwards that he was ill, and his aspect confirmed the report; but with all this, the real nature of the individual constantly developed itself, and I have now vividly present to my mental vision the curious combination of that grave mouth, with the quick glance of the eye to ascertain the prosperity of an insinuated pun, or the appreciation of a piece of practical humor.—CHARLES COWDEN CLARKE (*Gentleman's Magazine*, June, 1872).

Appearance, manner, and conversation.

In conversation he was by no means brilliant. When inclined to pun, which was not often, it seemed as if his wit was the issue of thought, and not an instinctive produce, such as I have noticed in other men who have thus become famous.—S. C. HALL ("Book of Memories").

Conversation.

There was seldom any conscious attempt at brilliancy in his talk; and so far from sharing in that weakness with which wits are generally credited, a desire to monopolize the conversation, he seemed ever ready in society to give way to any who would supply talk.—S. C. HALL ("Retrospect").[1]

It was scarcely until we saw Hood in his own

[1] Hall (Samuel Carter). Retrospect of a Long Life. 8vo. London and New York, 1883.

Conversation.

home, that we were able fully to appreciate his singular conversational talents. Always reserved in general society, it was when surrounded by some half-dozen personal friends in his home, and by his own fireside, that the stream of his conversation would flow on in such pleasant variety,—now referring to the current literature of the day, or to the topics then engaging public attention; now playfully quizzing some friend, often by giving him credit for some opinion or taste which he particularly disliked; or telling some strange story with such minuteness of detail, that we were fain to believe it true, until his sly laugh proved that we had interested ourselves in what was only "the coinage of the brain." . . . Never was there a companion so delightfully amusing as Thomas Hood, when enjoying himself among his friends. We remember one night, when he met a small party at our house, how he kept us two or three hours at the supper table, all unwitting of the time that had passed.—ANON. (*British Quarterly Review*, 1867).

His nature was, I believe, not to be a punster, perhaps not to be a wit. The best things I have ever heard Hood say are those which he said when I was with him alone. I have never known him laugh heartily. . . . The themes he selected for "talk" were usually of a grave and sombre cast; yet his playful fancy dealt with frivolities sometimes. . . . He was, however, generally cheerful, and often merry when in "the bosom of his family," and could, I am told, laugh heartily then; that when in reasonably good health he was "as

full of fun as a schoolboy."—S. C. HALL ("Book of Memories").

Modesty and patience.

Hood was a gentleman in two essential points; he was no egoist, and he made no more allusion to himself and his sayings and doings than if he had been a second-ledger clerk in a banking house. . . . Not only did Hood hint no reference to himself, but he extended to others the full privileges of conversation; he never interrupted, and he listened with Spartan patience to every one, and it was apparent to the commonest observer that not a speech, not an action made by any of the company escaped him.—CHARLES COWDEN CLARKE (*Gentleman's Magazine*, June, 1872.)

Hints on buying fish.

He enjoyed playing off little harmless practical jokes on my mother, who on her part bore them with the sweetest temper, and joined in the laugh against herself afterwards with great good humor. She was a capital subject for his fun, for she believed implicitly in whatever he told her, however improbable and though vowing seriously every time not to be taken in again, she was sure to be caught. Her innocent face of wonder and belief added greatly to the zest of the joke.

On one occasion soon after their marriage, my father was suddenly seized with rheumatic fever of a severe kind. On his partial recovery he was ordered to Brighton to recruit his strength. Sea air always produced a beneficial effect on his health. . . . At the time I mention he was so weak as to be obliged to be lifted into the coach at starting,

Hints on buying fish.

but the next day, refreshed by the first breath of the bracing air, he was almost himself. At breakfast he offered to give my mother a few hints on buying fish, adducing his own superior knowledge of the sea, as a reason for informing her ignorance as a young housekeeper. "Above all things, Jane," said he, "as they will endeavor to impose upon your inexperience, let nothing induce you to buy a plaice that has any appearance of red or orange spots, as they are sure signs of an advanced stage of decomposition." My mother promised faithful compliance in the innocence of her heart, and accordingly when the fishwoman came to the door, she descended to show off her newly acquired information. As it happened, the woman had very little except plaice, and these she turned over and over, praising their size and freshness. But the obnoxious red spots on every one of them still greeted my mother's dissatisfied eyes. On her hinting a doubt of their freshness, she was met by the assertion that they were not long out of the water, having been caught that morning. This shook my mother's doubts for a moment, but remembering my father's portrayal of the Brighton fishwomen's iniquitous falsehoods, she gravely shook her head, and mildly observed, in all the pride of conscious knowledge, "My good woman, it may be as you say, but I could not think of buying any plaice with those very unpleasant red spots!" The woman's answer was a perfect shout. "Lord bless your eyes, Mum! who ever seed any without 'em?" A suppressed giggle on the stairs revealed the perpetrator of the joke, and my father rushed off in a perfect ecstasy of laughter, leaving my poor discomfited

mother to appease the angry sea-nymph as she could.—MEMORIALS OF T. HOOD (Edited by his Children).[1]

In the early part of his residence at Wanstead, my father's boyish spirit of fun broke out as usual. On one occasion some boys were caught by him in the act of robbing an orchard ; with the assistance of the gardener, they were dragged trembling into the house. My mother's father happened to be staying there, an imposing-looking old gentleman, who had not forgotten his scholastic dignity when looking on anything in the shape of a boy. A hint to him sufficed, and he assumed an arm-chair and the character of a J. P. for the county. The frightened offenders were drawn up before him, and formally charged by my father with the theft, which was further proved by the contents of their pockets. The judge, assuming a severe air, immediately sentenced them to instant execution by hanging on the cherry tree. I can recollect being prompted by my father to kneel down and intercede for the culprits, and my frightened crying and the solemn farce of the whole scene had its due effect on the offenders. Down on their knees they dropped in a row, sobbing and whining most piteously, and vowing "never to do so no more." My father, thinking them sufficiently punished, gave the hint, and they were as solemnly pardoned, my father and grandfather laugh-

Practical jokes.

[1] Broderip (Frances Freeling) and Hood (Thomas). Memorials of Thomas Hood. Edited by his Children. 2 vols., 8vo. London, 1860.

ing heartily to see the celerity with which they made off.

Practical jokes.

On another occasion two or three friends came down for a day's shooting, and, as they often did, in the evening they rowed out into the middle of the little lake in an old punt. They were full of spirits, and had played off one or two practical jokes on their host, till on getting out of the boat, leaving him last, one of them gave it a push, and out went my father into the water. Fortunately it was the landing-place, and the water was not deep, but he was wet through. It was playing with edged tools to venture on such tricks with him, and he quietly determined to turn the tables. Accordingly he presently began to complain of cramps and stitches, and at last went in-doors. His friends getting rather ashamed of their rough fun, persuaded him to go to bed, which he immediately did. His groans and complaints increased so alarmingly, that they were almost at their wits' end what to do. My mother had received a quiet hint, and was therefore not alarmed, though much amused at the terrified efforts and prescriptions of the repentant jokers. There was no doctor to be had for miles, and all sorts of queer remedies were suggested and administered, my father shaking with laughing, while they supposed he had got ague or fever. One rushed up with a tea-kettle of boiling water hanging on his arm, another tottered under a tin bath, and a third brought the mustard. My father at length, as well as he could speak, gave out in a sepulchral voice that he was sure he was dying, and detailed some absurd directions for his will, which they were all

too frightened to see the fun of. At last he could stand it no longer, and after hearing the penitent offenders beg him to forgive them for their unfortunate joke, and beseech him to believe in their remorse, he burst into a perfect shout of laughing, which they thought at first was delirious frenzy, but which ultimately betrayed the joke.—("Hood Memorials"). *Practical jokes.*

In his last illness, reduced as he was to a skeleton, he noticed a very large mustard plaster which Mrs. Hood was making for him, and exclaimed, "O Mary! Mary!—that will be a great deal of mustard to a very little meat!"—J. R. PLANCHÉ ("Recollections and Reflections").[1] *Superfluity.*

My father was very ingenious . . . and had a knack of "cutting and contriving," of which we possess many evidences. While in Germany he bought a small toy theatre for us, and then (and subsequently at Camberwell, during an illness) drew, painted, and cut out the characters and scenery for a tragedy (Paul and Virginia), a spectacle (St. George and the Dragon), and a pantomime. The figures were very clever, the groups and processions capitally arranged—and the dragon *was* a dragon! . . . . On high days and holidays this theatre used to be brought out, and my father used to perform the pieces to the delight of the little friends (and big ones too) who were present. . . . He got some common wooden toy soldiers, and painted *Ingenuity—Inventing toys.*

[1] Planché (James Robinson). Recollections and Reflections; a Professional Autobiography. 2 vols., 8vo. London, 1872.

Ingenuity—Inventing toys.

them proper colors, putting feathers, epaulettes, and all other necessary accoutrements for officers, band, and privates, with colors and tents for each regiment. The whole formed two armies, which acted against each other by certain rules, not unlike chess, and the game was won by the general who took the best position. . . . This is another instance of the trouble and time he spent in finding amusement for his children.—("Hood Memorials.")

Commercial games.

My father was a very good arithmetician. Many of his rough MSS. were covered with sums in the neatest of figures. One of the games, which (as I have mentioned) he invented for us, was a truly British game of merchantmen. Boxes rigged with paper sails represented our traders, and were freighted with different articles of commerce, to be bartered at various "ports" in different parts of the room. For this game our father used to make us out miniature "bills of parcels, and freight," and merchants' accounts, which I only regret were not preserved, as they were remarkable for neatness and accuracy. —("Hood Memorials.")

Orderliness.

The same love of order that presided over his study table marked him throughout; he was neat and painstaking in everything. His notes, even when sent off by the printer's boy, were clearly written; and not only did he, as he has humorously told us, mind his p's and q's, but his very stops; and during our frequent correspondence, we never remember seeing a single blot, even on his most hurried notes. His pen and pencil drawings were beau-

tifully neat. He seemed, indeed, to have an almost fastidious dislike to anything that looked like a correction or alteration even in his slightest sketches. —ANON. (*British Quarterly Review*, 1867).

Unmusical.

My father, curiously enough, with the most delicate perception of the rhythm and melody of versifying, and the most acute instinct for any jarring syllable or word, and peculiarly happy in the musical cadence of his own poetry, had yet not the slightest ear for music. He *could* not sing a tune through correctly, and was rather amused by the defect than otherwise, especially when a phrenologist once told him his organs of time and tune were very deficient. Several people observed this in him, and one, who was just safe-landed from a rhapsody on music, in which he had indulged before my father, who didn't sympathize, said—"Ah, you know, you've no musical enthusiasm—you don't know what it is!" It was a dangerous thing to snub my father, for he generally gave as good as he took. In this instance he said—"Oh yes, I do know it—it's like turtle soup—for every pint of real you meet with gallons of mock, with calves' heads in proportion."—("Hood Memorials.")

Poverty and ill-health.

He possessed the most refined taste and appreciation for all the little luxuries and comforts that make up so much of the enjoyments of life; and the cares and annoyances that would be scarcely perceptible to a stronger and rougher organization, fell with a double weight on the mind overtasked by such constant and harassing occupation. . . .

Poverty and ill-health.

His life, like that of most modern literary men, was very barren of incident; there is therefore little to relate, save the ebb and flow of health and strength—

> "As in his breast the wave of life
> Kept heaving to and fro."

. . . With the distinct and even minute foreknowledge of organic and mortal disease, liable at any moment to a fatal and sudden termination, it must indeed have been a brave spirit to bear so cheerfully and courageously, as he did, that life, which was one long sickness. He knew that those dearest to him were dependent on his exertions, and his mental powers were cramped and tied down by pecuniary necessity; while his bodily frame was enfeebled by nervousness and exhaustion.—("Hood Memorials.")

Continual bodily suffering was not the only trial to which this fine spirit was subjected. The world heard no wail from his lips; no appeal for sympathy ever came from his pen; his high heart endured in silence; and, without a murmur of complaint, he died. Yet it is no secret now that for many years he had a fierce struggle with poverty; enjoying no luxuries and few comforts. . . . At the time when nearly every drawing-room, attic, and kitchen—when every class and order of society—was made merry and happy by the brilliant fancies and genuine humor of Thomas Hood, he was enduring pain of body and anguish of mind.—S. C. Hall ("Book of Memories").

In the memoir of Charles Wentworth Dilke, prefixed to his "Papers of a Critic,"[1] there is a letter of Hood's, somewhat long for quotation, but too valuable, as an indication of character, to be omitted. This letter was written in 1841, declining a present of £50, which had been offered him by the members of the Literary Fund:

Self-respect.

"GENTLEMEN: I have to acknowledge the receipt of a letter from your secretary which has deeply affected me.

"The adverse circumstances to which it alludes are, unfortunately, too well known from their public announcement in the *Athenæum* by my precocious executor and officious assignee. But I beg most emphatically to repeat that the disclosures so drawn from me were never intended to bespeak the world's pity or assistance. Sickness is too common to humanity, and poverty too old a companion of my order to justify such an appeal. The revelation was merely meant to show, when taunted with 'my creditors,' that I had been striving in humble imitation of an illustrious literary example to satisfy all claims upon me, and to account for my imperfect success. I am too proud of my profession to grudge it some suffering. I love it still, as Lord Byron loved England 'with all its faults,' and should hardly feel as one of the fraternity, if I had not my portion of the calamities of authors. More fortunate than many, I have succeeded not only in getting into print, but occasionally in getting out

[1] Dilke (Charles Wentworth). Papers of a Critic. With a Biographical Sketch by his Grandson, Sir C. W. Dilke. 2 vols., 8vo. London, 1875.

Self-respect.

of it, and surely a man who has overcome such formidable difficulties may hope and expect to get over the common-place ones of procuring bread and cheese.

"I am writing seriously, gentlemen, although in a cheerful tone, partly natural and partly intended to relieve you of some of your kindly concern on my account. Indeed my position at present is an easy one, compared with that of some eight months ago, when out of heart, and out of health, helpless, spiritless, sleepless, childless. I have now a home in my own country, and my little ones sit at my hearth. I smile sometimes, and even laugh. For the same benign Providence that gifted me with the power of amusing others has not denied me the ability of entertaining myself. Morever, as to mere worldly losses, I profess a cheerful philosophy, which can jest 'though China fall,' and for graver troubles a Christian faith, that consoles and supports me even in walking through something like the Valley of the Shadow of Death.

"My embarrassment and bad health are of such standing that I am become as it were seasoned. For the last six years I have been engaged in the same struggle, without seeking, receiving, or requiring any pecuniary assistance whatever. My pen and pencil procured not only enough for my own wants, but to form a surplus besides—a sort of literary fund of my own, which at this moment is 'doing good by stealth' to a person, not exactly of learning or genius, but whom, according to the example of your excellent society, I will forbear to name.

"To provide for similar wants there are the same

means and resources—the same head, heart, and hands—the same bad health—and may it only last long enough! In short, the same crazy vessel for the same foul weather; but I have not thought yet of hanging out my ensign upside down. *Self-respect.*

"Fortunately, since manhood I have been dependent solely on my own exertions—a condition which has exposed and enured me to vicissitude, whilst it has nourished a pride which will fight on, and has yet some retrenchments to make ere its surrender.

"I have now, gentlemen, described circumstances and feelings, which will explain and must excuse my present course. The honorable and liberal manner in which you have entertained an application—that a friendly delicacy concealed from me—is acknowledged with the most ardent gratitude. Your welcome sympathy is valued in proportion to the very great comfort and encouragement it affords me. Your kind wishes for my better health—my greatest want—I accept and thank you for with my whole heart; but I must not and cannot retain your money, which at the first safe opportunity will be returned. I really do not feel myself to be yet a proper object for your bounty, and should I ever become so, I fear that such a crisis will find me looking elsewhere—to the earth beneath me for final rest—and to the heaven above me for final justice.

"Pray excuse my trespassing at such length on your patience, and believe that I am, with the utmost respect,

"Gentlemen,

"Your most obliged and grateful servant,

"THOS. HOOD."

Presence of mind.

His presence of mind was remarkable; as his was, I think, naturally, and eventually from illness, a nervous nature. One night I was sitting up with him, my mother having gone to rest for a few hours, worn out with fatigue. He was seized, about twelve o'clock, with one of his alarming attacks of hemorrhage from the lungs. When it had momentarily ceased, he motioned for paper and pencil, and asked "if I was too frightened to stay with him?" I was too used to it now, and on my replying "No," he quietly and calmly wrote his wishes and directions on a slip of paper, as deliberately as if it were an ordinary matter. He forbade me to disturb my mother. When the doctor came, and ordered ice to be applied, my father wrote to remind me of a pond close by, where ice could be procured, nor did he forget to add a hint for refreshments to be prepared for the surgeon, who was to wait some hours to watch the case. This was in the midst of a very sudden and dangerous attack, that was, at the time, almost supposed to be his last.—("Hood Memorials.")

Generosity.

Though never through his life, even in the smallest meaning of the term, a rich man, never was there a more liberal hand and heart than his. He practised to the full that charity, of which he recognized the beauty in these touching words: "How kind are the poor to the poor!" . . . Surely that was a feeling beyond mere common charity, which induced him to assist from his scanty store, so precarious, and so hardly, and painfully earned, many who applied to him for help. A help that was

readily given by his generous heart, open to sorrow and pain, under any shape, or of whatever kind, not ostentatiously, for none but my mother knew of it. It is only by mere chance perhaps, that years afterwards, I have discovered traces of kindly deeds, and timely help to those in sorrow or want; shillings often given, when shillings were scarce, and always, at least, kind and sympathising words.—("Hood Memorials.") *Generosity.*

During his residence at Camberwell, a lady called on my father, who had been acquainted with him many years before. He had no very agreeable recollections of her, chiefly owing to having been annoyed before by her unasked obtrusion of her religious opinions upon him. Her call, therefore, was not productive of any very friendly manifestation on his part, and after sitting stiffly, and being replied to rather coldly and ceremoniously, she took her leave. The same week, however, she wrote him a most unjustifiable attack on his writings and religious opinions. She inquired with a kind of grim satisfaction what good his "Whims and Oddities" would do his soul? and how he would recall his levities in literature upon his death-bed? My father was pretty well used to attacks of this sort, but this was really going a little too far, and accordingly she received a copy of the following, which he ever after entitled "My Tract." [1] *A caustic letter.*

"The cool calculations you have indulged in on

[1] This remarkable letter, of which only a small portion can be here quoted, will be found in the Hood Memorials, vol. ii., page 103.

A caustic letter.

my desperate health, probable decease, and death-bed perturbations must have afforded you much Christian amusement, as your ignorance must have derived infinite comfort from your conviction of the inutility of literature, and all intellectual pursuits. And even your regrets over the 'Whims and Oddities, that have made thousands laugh' may be alleviated, if you will only reflect that Fanaticism has caused millions to shed blood, as well as tears; a tolerable set-off against my levities. For my own part, I thank God I have used the talents He has bestowed on me in so cheerful a spirit, and not abused them by writing the profane stuff called pious poetry, nor spiritualised my prose by stringing together Scriptural phrases, which have become the mere slang of a religious swell mob. Such impieties and blasphemies I leave to the Evangelical and Elect; to the sacrilegious quacks, who pound up equal parts of Bible and Babble, and convert wholesome food, by their nauseous handling, into filthiest physic; to the Canters, who profane all holy names and things by their application to common and vulgar uses; and to the presumptuous women, who, I verily believe with the Turks, have no souls of their own to mend, and therefore set themselves to patch and cobble the souls of the other gender. . . .

"In behalf of our literature I will boldly say that to our lay authors it is mainly owing, that the country is not at this hour enthralled by Priest-craft, Superstition, and, if you please, Popery, which by the bye has met with more efficient opponents in Dante, Boccaccio, and Rabelais (profane writers,

Madam), than in all the M'Neiles, M'Ghees, and Macaws, that have ever screamed within Exeter Hall. . . . .

A caustic letter.

"And now, Madam, farewell. Your mode of recalling yourself to my memory reminds me that your fanatical mother insulted mine in the last days of her life (which was marked by every Christian virtue), by the presentation of a Tract addressed to Infidels. I remember also that the same heartless woman intruded herself, with less reverence than a Mohawk Squaw would have exhibited, on the chamber of death; and interrupted with her jargon almost my very last interview with my dying parent. Such reminiscences warrant some severity; but, if more be wanting, know that my poor sister has been excited by a circle of Canters like yourself, into a religious frenzy, and is at this moment in a private mad-house.

"I am, Madam, yours with disgust,

"THOS. HOOD."

Religious character.

In his moral and social relations in life, Hood's character lives, I believe, untainted, and in his commerce with his own soul he appears to have been imbued with a deep sense of true and rational piety. Throughout the whole of his works that I am acquainted with there will not be found a single expression that shall bring in question the integrity of his character upon this point. And yet he did not escape the arraignment of persons who constituted themselves an authority to question his orthodoxy in such matters, and to denounce him accordingly.—CHARLES COWDEN CLARKE (*Gentleman's Magazine*, June, 1872).

Last days.

No words can describe his patience and resignation amidst all the fierce sufferings of the last month or two of his dying, as he said himself, "inch by inch." In the intervals between the terrible agonies that racked that exhausted frame, he talked quite calmly to us all of our future plans, and of what he wished to be done. . . . Now, indeed, might those who cavilled at his cheerful wit and genial philosophy (never directed against what was really high or holy) have taken a lesson how to die! Now, indeed, might they have seen how a great and good spirit, that had for many years daily battled with disease and privation, could in the very prime of its mental power, calmly and solemnly lay down its burthen and its toil. Those who doubted his religious belief, and were almost ready to say to him, like the lady he speaks of in his "Literary Reminiscences," "Mr. Hood, are you an Infidel?" *must* then have felt the force of that *practical* faith and Christianity which could trust itself so readily and undoubtingly to the mercy of that great Creator, Whose visible handiwork in His creation he had known and loved so well.—("Hood Memorials.")

He saw the on-coming of death with great cheerfulness, though without anything approaching to levity; and last night, when his friends, Harvey and another, came, he bade them come up, had wine brought, and made us all drink a glass with him, "that he might know us for friends, as of old, and not undertakers." He conversed for about an hour in his old playful way, with now and then a word or

two full of deep and tender feeling. When I left he bade me good-bye, and kissed me, shedding tears, and saying that perhaps we never should meet again.—F. O. WARD (from a Letter quoted in S. C. Hall's "Book of Memories"). *Last days.*

His daughter writes me thus of his last hour on earth :—"Those who lectured him on his merry sallies and innocent gayety should have been present at his death-bed, to see how the gentlest and most loving heart in the world could die!" "Thinking himself dying, he called us round him—my mother, my little brother, and myself—to receive his last kiss and blessing, tenderly and fondly given; and gently clasping my mother's hand, he said, 'Remember, Jane, I forgive all—*all!*' He lay for some time calmly and quietly, but breathing painfully and slowly; and my mother, bending over him, heard him murmur faintly, 'O Lord, say, Arise, take up thy cross, and follow Me!'"—S. C. HALL ("A Book of Memories").

He dies in dearest love and peace with his children, wife, friends; to the former especially his whole life had been devoted, and every day showed his fidelity, simplicity, and affection. In going through the record of his most pure, modest, honorable life, and living along with him, you come to trust him thoroughly, and feel that here is a most loyal, affectionate, and upright soul, with which you have been brought into communion. Can we say as much of the lives of all men of letters? Here is *Thackeray's tribute.*

one at least without guile, without pretension, without scheming, of a pure life, to his family and little modest circle of friends tenderly devoted.—W. M. THACKERAY ("Roundabout Papers").[1]

Thackeray's tribute.

[1] Thackeray (William Makepeace). Roundabout Papers. London, 1863.

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY,

Lord Macaulay.

1800–1859.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

MACAULAY may be understood without tasking any peculiar gifts of discernment or penetration. His character is transparent. It suggests no baffling questions, and affords no room for speculation or conjecture—unless, indeed, we may wonder at his singularly negative attitude in respect to the supernatural. To call him irreligious would, perhaps, convey a false impression; but it may fairly be said, that he showed an absolute indifference to all the mysteries which transcend the common experiences of social and political life.

Throughout his life the great Whig historian and statesman moved steadily forward from one success to another; winning whatever prizes he chose to labor for; accomplishing worthy purposes by honorable means. He suffered no serious misfortunes. Until the closing years of his life he enjoyed robust health. He never felt the torment of unsatisfied doubts, or the shock of fiercely conflicting passions. He was aided by favorable circumstances, and unusual talents; but his brilliant career must be ascribed chiefly to the persistent energy and industry which he brought to bear upon every undertaking in which he engaged.

Hostile criticism could discover in him no taint of dishonor, and was forced to acknowledge his high moral excellence. While he was deficient in the finer qualities of tact and intuitive delicacy, his sturdy virtues command universal respect. He proved fully equal to the important responsibilities of his public life, and wore his honors with modesty. There is one aspect, however, in which he is peculiarly attractive. He appears nowhere else so well as in his daily life at home. It seems strange that a man of such strongly domestic tastes and aptitudes should have remained a bachelor. There is a great charm in the simplicity and beauty of all his intercourse with his family; in his unselfish devotion to the sisters, to whom he took the place of a father; in his unbounded delight in the society of his nephews and nieces. Here we see him at his best.

It may seem invidious to call him superficial; yet he may be so characterized without injustice. He had but slight acquaintance with the stronger passions. There was in him a prosaic quality, a certain commonness of nature, which distinctly separates him from many of his contemporaries, less gifted, and far less distinguished than himself. His interests and sympathies were limited to a comparatively narrow range. He was indifferent to the beauty of nature; his attention was seldom attracted by the notable works of his brother authors; and he did not concern himself with the deepest problems of life and character. For these reasons, notwithstanding his remarkable powers, and his many engaging and admirable traits, he fails to arouse the deep personal interest with which we regard such men as Lamb

and Hood. He inspires esteem rather than enthusiasm.

The "Life and Letters of Macaulay," edited by his nephew, the Hon. George Otto Trevelyan, contains all that is requisite to a full knowledge of the man. There is little need to go further than this comprehensive and able work. Several shorter books, based upon this, have been published. The latest work is Mr. J. C. Morison's volume, in the "English Men of Letters" series; this, however, is more a critical review of Macaulay's writings, than a biography. The following works may also be mentioned: Mrs. Kemble's "Later Records;" Hawthorne's "English Note-books;" Macvey Napier's Correspondence, the "Greville Memoirs;" Alison's "Autobiography;" and the "Journal" of Lord Cockburn. In *Lippincott's Magazine*, May, 1876, there is an interesting account of Macaulay's conversation at a dinner-party in 1857.

LEADING EVENTS OF MACAULAY'S LIFE.

1800.	Born, October 25th, at Rothley Temple, Leicestershire.
1818.—(Aged 18.)	At Cambridge University.
1825.—(Aged 25.)	Publishes the essay upon Milton in the *Edinburgh Review.*
1826.—(Aged 26.)	Called to the bar.
1828.—(Aged 28.)	Made Commissioner of Bankruptcy.
1830.—(Aged 30.)	Enters Parliament.
1834.—(Aged 34.)	Goes to India as a Member of the Supreme Council.
1837.—(Aged 37.)	Frames a Penal Code for India.
1838.—(Aged 38.)	Returns to England.

1839.—(Aged 39.) Again in Parliament. Becomes a Cabinet Minister.

1842.—(Aged 42.) Publishes "Lays of Ancient Rome."

1848.—(Aged 48.) Publishes the first volumes of his "History." Elected Lord Rector of the University of Glasgow.

1855.—(Aged 55.) Publishes the third and fourth volumes of his "History."

1856.—(Aged 56.) Retires from Parliament.

1857.—(Aged 57.) Is made a Peer. Publishes the last volume of his "History."

1859.—(Aged 59 years and 2 months.) Dies, December 28th.

MACAULAY.

FROM the time that he was three years old he read incessantly, for the most part lying on the rug before the fire, with his book on the ground, and a piece of bread and butter in his hand. A very clever woman who then lived in the house as parlor-maid told how he used to sit in his nankeen frock, perched on the table by her as she was cleaning the plate, and expounding to her out of a volume as big as himself. He did not care for toys, but was very fond of taking his walk, when he would hold forth to his companion, whether nurse or mother, telling interminable stories out of his own head, or repeating what he had been reading in language far above his years. His memory retained without effort the phraseology of the book which he had been last engaged on, and he talked, as the maid said, "quite printed words," which produced an effect that appeared formal, and often, no doubt, exceedingly droll.

Early childhood.

Mrs. Hannah More was fond of relating how she called at Mr. Macaulay's, and was met by a fair, pretty, slight child, with abundance of light hair, about four years of age, who came to the front door to receive her, and tell her that his parents were out, but that if she would be good enough to come

Early childhood.

in he would bring her a glass of old spirits: a proposition which greatly startled the good lady, who had never aspired beyond cowslip wine. When questioned as to what he knew about old spirits he could only say that Robinson Crusoe often had some. About this period his father took him on a visit to Lady Waldegrave at Strawberry Hill. . . . After some time had been spent among the wonders of the Oxford Collection, of which he ever after carried a catalogue in his head, a servant who was waiting upon the company in the great gallery spilled some hot coffee over his legs. The hostess was all kindness and compassion, and when, after a while, she asked how he was feeling, the little fellow looked up in her face, and replied, "Thank you, madam, the agony is abated." But it must not be supposed that his quaint manners proceeded from affectation or conceit; for all testimony declares that a more simple and natural child never lived, or a more lively and merry one.—G. O. TREVELYAN ("Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay").[1]

Mature character of his childish productions.

It is worthy of note that the voluminous writings of his childhood, dashed off at headlong speed in the odds and ends of leisure from school-study and nursery routine, are not only perfectly correct in spelling and grammar, but display the same lucidity of meaning and scrupulous accuracy in punctuation and other minor details of the literary art, which characterize his mature works.—G. O. TREVELYAN ("Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay").

[1] Trevelyan (George Otto). Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay. 2 vols., 8vo. London, 1876.

He had at his command the resources of the Common. . . . That delightful wilderness of gore bushes, and poplar groves, and gravel-pits, and ponds great and small, was to little Tom Macaulay a region of inexhaustible romance and mystery. He explored its recesses; he composed, and almost believed its legends; he invented for its different features a nomenclature which has been faithfully preserved by two generations of children. A slight ridge intersected by deep ditches toward the west of the Common, the very existence of which no one above eight years old would notice, was dignified with the title of the Alps; while the elevated island, covered with shrubs, that gives a name to the Mount pond, was regarded with infinite awe, as being the nearest approach within the circuit of his observation to a conception of the majesty of Sinai. Indeed, at this period his infant fancy was much exercised with the threats and terrors of the Law. He had a little plot of ground at the back of the house, marked out as his own by a row of oyster-shells, which a maid one day threw away as rubbish. He went straight to the drawing-room, where his mother was entertaining some visitors, walked into the circle, and said, very solemnly, "Cursed be Sally; for it is written, Cursed is he that removeth his neighbor's landmark."—G. O. TREVELYAN ("Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay").

"Cursed be Sally."

Lady Trevelyan[1] thus describes their life at Clapham: "I think that my fathers' strictness was a good counterpoise to the perfect worship of your uncle

[1] Lady Trevelyan was Hannah Macaulay, the sister of Lord Macaulay, and the mother of the author of the "Life and Letters."

Boyhood at home.

by the rest of the family. To us he was an object of passionate love and devotion. To us he could do no wrong. His unruffled sweetness of temper, his unfailing flow of spirits, his amusing talk, all made his presence so delightful that his wishes and his tastes were our law. He hated strangers, and his notion of perfect happiness was to see us all working round him while he read aloud a novel, and then to walk all together on the Common, or, if it rained, to have a frightfully noisy game of hide-and-seek. . . . My earliest recollections speak of the intense happiness of the holidays, beginning with finding him in papa's room in the morning; the awe at the idea of his having reached home in the dark after we were in bed, and the Saturnalia which at once set in; no lessons; nothing but fun and merriment for the whole six weeks."—G. O. TREVELYAN ("Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay").

In youth.

November 29, 1826.—I had a most interesting companion in young Macaulay, one of the most promising of the rising generation I have seen for a long time. . . . He has a good face—not the delicate features of a man of genius and sensibility, but the strong lines and well-knit limbs of a man sturdy in body and mind. Very eloquent and cheerful. Overflowing with words and not poor in thought. Liberal in opinion, but no Radical. He seems a correct as well as a full man. He showed a minute knowledge of subjects not introduced by himself.—HENRY CRABB ROBINSON ("Diary").[1]

[1] Robinson (Henry Crabb). Diary, Reminiscences, and Correspondence. Edited by T. Sadler. 3 vols., 8vo. London, 1869.

Macaulay's outward man was never better described than in two sentences of Praed's Introduction to Knight's *Quarterly Magazine.* "There came up a short manly figure, marvellously upright, with a bad neckcloth, and one hand in his waistcoat pocket. Of regular beauty he had little to boast; but in faces where there is an expression of great power, or of great good-humor, or both, you do not regret its absence." This picture, in which every touch is correct, tells all that there is to be told. He had a massive head, and features of a powerful and rugged cast; but so constantly lighted up by every joyful and ennobling emotion that it mattered little if, when absolutely quiescent, his face was rather homely than handsome. While conversing at table, no one thought him otherwise than good-looking; but when he rose he was seen to be short and stout in figure. "At Holland House, the other day," writes his sister Margaret, in 1831, "Tom met Lady Lyndhurst for the first time. She said to him, 'Mr. Macaulay, you are so different to what I expected. I thought you were dark and thin, but you are fair, and, really, Mr. Macaulay, you are fat.'" He at all times sat and stood straight, full, and square. . . . He dressed badly, but not cheaply. His clothes, though ill put on, were good, and his wardrobe was always enormously overstocked. Later in life he indulged himself in an almost inexhaustible succession of handsome embroidered waistcoats, which he used to regard with much complacency. He was unhandy to a degree quite unexampled in the experience of all who knew him. When in the open air, he wore perfectly new dark

Appearance and manner.

Appearance and manner.

kid gloves, into the fingers of which he never succeeded in inserting his own more than half way. After he had sailed for India, there were found in his chambers between fifty or sixty strops, hacked into strips and splinters, and razors without beginning or end. About the same period he hurt his hand, and was reduced to send for a barber. After the operation, he asked what was to pay. "Oh, sir," said the man, "whatever you usually give the person who shaves you." "In that case," said Macaulay, "I should give you a great gash on each cheek." —G. O. TREVELYAN ("Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay").

Personal appearance.

Macaulay, says his nephew and historian, dressed badly but not poorly. Such was the uncle, already grown famous, of young Otto Trevelyan. But Tom Macaulay, of 1820–1825, was altogether slovenly. He was an undergraduate of Trinity when a certain don sent him an invitation to dinner. Macaulay, who (at that time) hated society, had already written a letter of refusal, when some comrades burst into his room, and being informed of the correspondence pending, told Macaulay that "he must accept." As the invitation was for that very day, they further decided that Macaulay must be washed, scrubbed for the occasion, for in those days he was excessively negligent of his personal appearance. And the thing was done *vi et armis*.—GRENVILLE MURRAY ("Personal Reminiscences," published in the *Swiss Times*, 1881).

He is not intellectual in his outward appearance. In manner his defect is that he is heavy and lumber-

ing, though not big, and has an air of vulgarity.—LORD COCKBURN ("Journal").[1]

Personal appearance.

His face was round, and his complexion was colorless, one might almost say pallid : his hair, which appeared to have been of a brownish hue, had become almost white. He was no doubt then (1857) beginning to break in health, and perhaps this, which could only be called a premature decay, was the penalty he was at length paying for the years he had spent in India. His neck was short, and his figure was short and ungainly. His eye had a quick flash, and his change of expression was rapid ; his head, too, had a quick movement ; and altogether there was a look of vivacity which showed that his intellect was as keen as ever.—E. Y. (*Lippincott's Magazine*, May, 1876).

July, 1856.—All through breakfast I had been more and more impressed by the aspect of one of the guests. . . . He was a man of large presence, —a portly personage, gray-haired, but scarcely as yet aged ; and his face had a remarkable intelligence, not vivid nor sparkling, but conjoined with great quietude,—and if it gleamed or brightened at one time more than another, it was like the sheen over a broad surface of sea. There was a somewhat careless self-possession, large and broad enough to be called dignity ; and the more I looked at him, the more I knew that he was a distinguished person, and wondered who. . . . At last,—I do not

[1] Cockburn (Henry Thomas, Lord). Journal ; being a Continuation of Memorials of his Time. 2 vols., 8vo. Edinburgh, 1874.

Personal appearance.

know how the conviction came,—but I became aware that it was Macaulay, and began to see some slight resemblance to his portraits. But I have never seen any that is not wretchedly unworthy of the original.—NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE ("English Note-books").[1]

Conversation.

Even as a very young man nine people out of ten liked nothing better than to listen to him : which was fortunate ; because in his early days he had scanty respect of persons, either as regarded the choice of his topics or the quantity of his words. But with his excellent temper, and entire absence of conceit, he soon began to learn consideration for others in small things as well as in great. By the time he was fairly launched in London, he was agreeable in company as well as forcible and amusing. Wilberforce speaks of his "unruffled good humor." Sir Robert Inglis, a good observer, with ample opportunity of forming a judgment, pronounced that he conversed, and did not dictate, and that he was loud, but never overbearing.—G. O. TREVELYAN ("Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay").

Whatever fault might be found with Macaulay's gestures as an orator, his appearance and bearing in conversation were singularly effective. Sitting bolt upright, his hands resting upon the arms of his chair or folded over the handle of his walking-stick ; knitting his great eyebrows if the subject was one which had to be thought out as he went along, or

[1] Hawthorne (Nathaniel). Passages from English Note-Books. 2 vols., 12mo. Boston : Fields, Osgood & Co. 1870.

brightening from the forehead downward when a burst of humor was coming. His massive features and honest glance suited well with the manly, sagacious sentiments which he set forth in his pleasant, sonorous voice, and in his racy, and admirably intelligible language. To get at his meaning, people had never the need to think twice, and they certainly had seldom the time. And with all his ardor, and all his strength and energy of conviction, he was so truly considerate toward others, so delicately courteous with the courtesy which is of the essence, and not only in the manner! However eager had been the debate, and however prolonged the sitting, no one in the company ever had personal reasons for wishing a word of his unsaid, or a look or a tone recalled. . . . Sometimes he would recast his thoughts; and give them over again in the shape of an epigram. "You call me a Liberal," he said; "but I don't know that in these days I deserve the name. I am opposed to the abolition of standing armies. I am opposed to the abrogation of capital punishment. I am opposed to the destruction of the National Church. In short, I am in favor of war, hanging, and Church establishments."—G. O. TREVELYAN ("Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay").

Conversation.

His conversation . . . is good, but, with the usual defects of professed talkers, it is a great deal too abundant and is not easy. He utters with great rapidity, and with a panting anxiety. Though the matter of his conversation, therefore, is always admirable, the style is not pleasing. Sydney Smith, an enormous talker, complains of Macaulay never

Conversation.

letting him get in a word. Smith once said to him, "Now, Macaulay, when I am gone you'll be sorry that you never heard me speak." On another occasion Smith said that he had found Macaulay in bed from illness, and that he was therefore more agreeable than he had ever seen him. "There were some glorious flashes of silence."—LORD COCKBURN ("Journal").

He was the tyrant of the table, and rarely tolerated any talk but his own. . . . "I do not believe," Sydney Smith used to say, "that Macaulay ever did hear my voice. Sometimes, when I have told a good story, I have thought to myself, 'Poor Macaulay! he will be very sorry some day to have missed hearing that.'" . . . Macaulay sat still only when compelled by sheer force, and then only for a few seconds. A professional talker or a rival he put down in an instant, without the slightest hesitation or compunction, and trampled him into the bargain if he showed any signs of resistance.—CHARLES PEBODY (*Gentleman's Magazine*, October, 1870).

Breakfasted this morning with Macaulay. . . . In my passage through this world I have never met with anything so wonderful as Macaulay's talk during the two hours we were with him. There was no department of literature in which he did not quote largely and appropriately—from the Greek and Latin Fathers, to the last numbers of *Punch*, and the *Times*.—LORD CAMPBELL ("Autobiography").[1]

[1] Campbell (John, Lord). Selections from his Autobiography, Diary, and Letters. Edited by his Daughter, the Hon. Mrs. Hardcastle. 2 vols., 8vo. London, 1881.

Tom's manners I cannot defend. To him it is a matter of utter indifference who the company may be,—ladies, bishops, lawyers, officers of the army, princes of the blood, or distinguished foreigners, whom the guests are invited to meet,—off he goes at score with hardly a gleam of silence, without any adaptation to his auditory of the topics he discusses, and without any remorse or any consciousness of his having acted at all improperly when they have left him in disgust.—LORD CAMPBELL ("Autobiography"). *Conversation.*

I have often heard him styled by those, who in general appreciated conversation the most, a perfect bore. I must own that I have sometimes seen him to be such in company, and admitted to be so by his greatest admirers. The reason is to be found in the intensity of his ideas, and the vast extent of his erudition, which caused him to set off at a gallop when any new subject was started, and often utterly distance the slower mortals who were toiling to keep him in sight behind. He had little sympathy with the minds or wishes of his hearers, but poured out whatever chain of ideas or incidents occupied his own mind at the time, without the slightest regard to whether it was of interest to his auditors.—SIR A. ALISON ("Autobiography").[1]

He is absolutely renowned in society as the greatest bore that ever yet appeared. I have seen people come in from Holland House, breathless and knocked

[1] Alison (Sir Archibald). Some Account of my Life and Writings. An Autobiography. 2 vols., 8vo. London, 1883.

Conversation.

up, and able to say nothing but "Oh dear, oh mercy." What's the matter? being asked. "Oh, Macaulay." Then every one said, "That accounts for it—you're lucky to be alive," etc.—LORD BROUGHAM, 1842 ("Correspondence of Macvey Napier").[1]

I used . . . to look in during the course of the day, upon whatever circle might be gathered in the drawing or morning rooms, for a few minutes at a time, and remember, on this occasion of my meeting Macaulay at Bowood, my amazement at finding him always in the same position on the hearth-rug, always talking, always answering everybody's questions about everything, always pouring forth eloquent knowledge; and I used to listen to him till I was breathless with what I thought ought to have been *his* exhaustion. As one approached the room, the loud, even declamatory sound of his voice made itself heard like the uninterrupted flow of a fountain. He stood there from morning till evening, like a knight in the lists, challenging and accepting the challenge of all comers. There never was such a speech-"power," and as the volume of his voice was full and sonorous, he had immense advantages in sound as well as sense over his adversaries. Sydney Smith's humorous and good-humored rage at his prolific talk was very funny. Rogers's, of course, was not good-humored.—FRANCES ANN KEMBLE ("Records of Later Life").[2]

[1] Napier (Macvey). Selections from the Correspondence of. Edited by his Son. 8vo. London, 1879.

[2] Kemble (Frances Ann). Records of Later Life. 12mo. New York: Henry Holt & Co. 1882.

If a company of giants were got together, very likely one or two of the mere six-feet-six people might be angry at the incontestable superiority of the very tallest of the party: and so I have heard some London wits, rather peevish at Macaulay's superiority, complain that he occupied too much of the talk, and so forth. Now that wonderful tongue is to speak no more, will not many a man grieve that he no longer has the chance to listen? To remember the talk is to wonder: to think not only of the treasures he had in his memory, but of the trifles he had stored there, and could produce with equal readiness. Almost on the last day I had the fortune to see him, a conversation happened suddenly to spring up about senior wranglers, and what they had done in after life. To the almost terror of the persons present, Macaulay began with the senior wrangler of 1801–2–3–4, and so on, giving the name of each, and relating his subsequent career and rise. Every man who has known him has his story regarding that astonishing memory. It may be that he was not ill pleased that you should recognize it; but to those prodigious intellectual feats, which were so easy to him, who would grudge his tribute of homage? His talk was, in a word, admirable, and we admired it.—W. M. THACKERAY ("Roundabout Papers"). *A criticism of the critics.*

February 6, 1832.—Dined yesterday with Lord Holland; came very late, and found a vacant place between Sir George Robinson and a common-looking man in black. As soon as I had time to look at my neighbor, I began to speculate (as one usually *Greville's recollections.*

Greville's recollections.

does) as to who he might be, and as he did not for some time open his lips except to eat, I settled that he was some obscure man of letters or of medicine, perhaps a cholera doctor. In a short time the conversation turned upon early and late education, and Lord Holland said he had always remarked that self-educated men were peculiarly conceited and arrogant. . . . My neighbor observed that he thought the most remarkable example of self-education was that of Alfieri, who had reached the age of thirty without having acquired any accomplishment save that of driving, and who was so ignorant of his own language, that he had to learn it like a child, beginning with elementary books. Lord Holland quoted Julius Cæsar and Scaliger as examples of late education, said that the latter had been wounded, and that he had been married and commenced learning Greek the same day, when my neighbor remarked "that he supposed his learning Greek was not an instantaneous act like his marriage." This remark, and the manner of it, gave me the notion that he was a dull fellow, for it came out in a way which bordered on the ridiculous, so as to excite something like a sneer. I was a little surprised to hear him continue the thread of conversation (from Scaliger's wound) and talk of Loyola having been wounded at Pampeluna. I wondered how he happened to know anything about Loyola's wound. Having thus settled my opinion, I went on eating my dinner, when Lord Auckland, who was sitting opposite to me, addressed my neighbor, "Mr. Macaulay, will you drink a glass of wine?" I thought I should have dropped off my

chair. It was *Macaulay*, the man I had been so long most curious to see and to hear, whose genius, eloquence, astonishing knowledge, and diversified talents have excited my wonder and admiration for such a length of time, and here I had been sitting next to him, hearing him talk, and setting him down for a dull fellow. I felt as if he could have read my thoughts, and the perspiration burst from every pore of my face, and yet it was impossible not to be amused at the idea. It was not till Macaulay stood up that I was aware of all the vulgarity and ungainliness of his appearance ; not a ray of intellect beams from his countenance ; a lump of more ordinary clay never enclosed a powerful mind and lively imagination. He had a cold and sore throat, the latter of which occasioned a constant contraction of the muscles of the thorax, making him appear as if in momentary danger of a fit. His manner struck me as not pleasing, but it was not assuming, unembarrassed, yet not easy, unpolished, yet not coarse ; there was no kind of usurpation of the conversation, no tenacity as to opinion or facts, no assumption of superiority, but the variety and extent of his information were soon apparent, for whatever subject was touched upon he evinced the utmost familiarity with it ; quotation, illustration, anecdote, seemed ready in his hands for every topic.

Greville's recollections.

August 12, 1832. — Dined yesterday at Holland House. . . . Macaulay is a most extraordinary man, and his astonishing knowledge is every moment exhibited, but (as far as I have yet seen of him, which is not sufficient to judge) he is not *agreeable*. His propositions and his allusions are rather

Greville's recollections.

too abrupt; he starts topics not altogether naturally; then he has none of the graces of conversation, none of that exquisite tact and refinement which are the result of a felicitous intuition or a long acquaintance with good society, or more probably a mixture of both. The mighty mass of his knowledge is not animated by that subtle spirit of taste and discretion which alone can give it the qualities of lightness and elasticity, and without which, though he may have the power of instructing and astonishing, he never will obtain that of delighting and captivating his hearers.

November 10, 1833.—Dined with Rogers, Moore, Sydney Smith, Macaulay. Sydney less vivacious than usual, and somewhat overpowered and talked down by what Moore called the "*flumen sermonis*" of Macaulay. Sydney calls Macaulay "a book in breeches." All that this latter says, all that he writes, exhibits his great powers and astonishing information, but I don't think he is agreeable. . . . He wants variety, elasticity, gracefulness: his is a roaring torrent, and not a meandering stream of talk. I believe we would all of us have been glad to exchange some of his sense for some of Sydney Smith's nonsense.—CHARLES C. F. GREVILLE ("Memoirs").[1]

Far superior to Brougham in general knowledge, in fancy, imagination, and in the art of composition, he is greatly inferior to him in those qualities which

[1] Greville (Charles C. F.). A Journal of the Reigns of King George IV. and King William IV. Edited by Henry Reeve. 3 vols., 8vo. London, 1874.

raise men to social and political eminence. Brougham, tall, thin, and commanding in figure, with a face which, however ugly, is full of expression, and a voice of great power, variety, and even melody, notwithstanding his occasional prolixity and tediousness, is an orator in every sense of the word. Macaulay, short, fat, and ungraceful, with a round, thick, unmeaning face, and with rather a lisp, though he has made speeches of great merit, and of a very high style of eloquence in point of composition, has no pretensions to be put in competition with Brougham in the House of Commons. Nor is the difference and the inferiority of Macaulay less marked in society. Macaulay, indeed, is a great talker, and pours forth floods of knowledge on all subjects ; but the gracefulness, lightness, and variety are wanting in his talk which are so conspicuous in his writings ; there is not enough of alloy in the metal of his conversation ; it is too didactic, it is all too good, and not sufficiently flexible, plastic, and diversified for general society. Brougham, on the other hand, is all life, spirit, and gayety—" from grave to gay, from lively to severe "—dashing through every description of folly and fun, dealing in those rapid transitions by which the attention and imagination are arrested and excited ; always amusing, always instructive, never tedious, elevated to the height of the greatest intellect, and familiar with the most abstruse subjects, and at the same moment conciliating the humble pretensions of inferior minds by dropping into the midst of their pursuits and objects with a fervor and intensity of interest which surprises and delights his associates, and, above all,

Compared with Brougham.

which puts them at their ease.[1]—CHARLES C. F. GREVILLE ("The Greville Memoirs").

Opinions of his oratory.

Macaulay's reputation and authority in Parliament owed nothing to the outward graces of the orator. On this head the recollections of the reporters' gallery . . . are unanimous and precise. Mr. Clifford, of the *Times*, says: "His action—the little that he used—was rather ungainly. His voice was full and loud; but it had not the light and shade, or the modulation, found in practised speakers. . . . "He used scarcely any action," says a gentleman on the staff of the *Standard*. "He would turn round on his heel, and lean slightly on the table; but there was nothing like demonstrative or dramatic action. He spoke with great rapidity; and there was very little inflection in the voice, which, however, was in itself not unmusical. . . . It was the matter and the language, rather than the manner, that took the audience captive." Mr. Downing, of the *Daily News*, writes: "It was quite evident that Macaulay had not learned the art of speaking from the platform, the pulpit, the forum, or any of the usual modes of obtaining a fluent diction. He was at once too robust and too recondite for these methods of introduction to the oratorical art. In all probability it was that fulness of mind, which broke out in many departments, that consti-

[1] This was written in 1836. In 1850 Greville remarks upon it, —"All this has long ceased to be true of Brougham. Macaulay, without having either the wit or the *charm* which constitutes the highest kind of colloquial excellence or success, is a marvellous, an unrivalled (in his way), and a delightful talker."

tuted him a born orator. Vehemence of thought, vehemence of language, vehemence of manner, were his chief characteristics. The listener might almost fancy he heard ideas and words gurgling in the speaker's throat for priority of utterance. There was nothing graduated or undulating about him. He plunged at once into the heart of the matter, and continued his loud resounding pace from beginning to end, without halt or pause. He was not a long-winded speaker. In fact, his earnestness was so great, that it would have failed under a very long effort. He had the faculty, possessed by every great orator, of compressing a great deal in a short space.—G. O. TREVELYAN ("Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay"). *Oratory.*

Every contemporary critic agrees in saying that it was very different to read these speeches in the *Times* and to listen to them in the gallery of the House of Commons. All you heard there was a harsh, shrill voice, a voice without a note of music in it, pouring out a torrent of words without the slightest variation of tone, without the slightest attempt at emphasis, without a single pause of any description. . . . And if there was little in his action or his voice to recommend Macaulay's speeches, there was still less in his personal appearance. What you saw when you fixed your eye upon the owner of that shrill, monotonous voice, was a short, thickset man, as stiff as an automaton, with a head and shoulders like those of a codfish, standing with his left hand thrown behind his back, and using his right now and then without any par-

Oratory.

ticular grace to emphasize a sentence by a series of short, sharp jerks. All the expression of his face lay in his eye. This was of a deep blue, and distinguished like Jeffrey's, by its keenness and brilliancy. His hair was of a beautiful jet black. Yet as you listened to this automaton, . . . the stiff and boyish form disappeared by magic, and even the shrill voice ceased to grate on the ear, as you followed that masterly and symmetrical discussion of the question, so ingenious, so thoughtful, so rich in fine illustrations, that you held your breath to listen.—CHARLES PEBODY (*Gentleman's Magazine*, October, 1870).

He had no talents for extempore speaking. I have seen him attempt it—only, however, when forced to it by the situation he held under Government—on several occasions; but in every such instance he acquitted himself very indifferently. . . . His speeches were always most carefully studied, and committed to memory, exactly as he delivered them, beforehand. . . . He was an excellent speaker withal—not forcible or vehement, carrying you away, as it were, by force; but seducing you, taking you a willing captive, . . . wherever he chose to go.—JAMES GRANT ("Random Recollections").[1]

The world, which has forgotten that Newton excelled as an administrator and Voltaire as a man of business, remembers somewhat faintly that Ma-

[1] Grant (James). Random Recollections of the House of Commons. 12mo. (Anon.) London, 1836.

caulay was an eminent orator, and, for a time at least, a strenuous politician. The universal voice of his contemporaries during the first three years of his parliamentary career testifies to the leading part which he played in the House of Commons so long as with all his heart he cared, and with all his might he tried, to play it. Jeffrey . . . says, in his account of an evening's discussion on the Reform Bill. "Not a very striking debate. There was but one exception, and it was a brilliant one. I mean Macaulay, who surpassed his former appearance in closeness, fire, and vigor, and very much improved the effect of it by a more steady and graceful delivery. It was prodigiously cheered, as it deserved, and, I think, puts him clearly at the head of the great speakers, if not the debaters, of the House." . . . Sir James Mackintosh writes from the library of the House of Commons, "Macaulay and Stanley have made two of the finest speeches ever spoken in Parliament;" and a little farther on he classes together the two young orators as "the chiefs of the next, or rather of this, generation."—G. O. TREVELYAN ("Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay").

Success in Parliament.

The secret of his immense acquirements lay in two invaluable gifts of nature: an unerring memory, and the capacity of taking in at a glance the contents of a printed page. During the first part of his life he remembered whatever caught his fancy, without going through the process of consciously getting it by heart. As a child, during one of the numerous seasons when the social duties de-

Two natural gifts.

Two natural gifts.

volved upon Mr. Macaulay, he accompanied his father on an afternoon call, and found on a table the "Lay of the Last Minstrel," which he had never before met with. He kept himself quiet with his prize while the elders were talking, and on his return home sat down upon his mother's bed, and repeated to her as many cantos as she had the patience or the strength to listen to. At one period of his life he was known to say that, if by some miracle of vandalism all copies of "Paradise Lost" and "The Pilgrim's Progress" were destroyed off the face of the earth, he would undertake to reproduce them both from recollection whenever a revival of learning came. . . .

As he grew older, this wonderful power became impaired so far that getting by rote the compositions of others was no longer an involuntary process. . . . Macaulay's extraordinary faculty of assimilating printed matter at first sight remained the same through life. To the end he read books faster than other people skimmed them, and skimmed them as fast as anyone else could turn the leaves. "He seemed to read through the skin," said one who had often watched the operation.—G. O. TREVELYAN ("Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay").

Feats of memory.

He was always willing to accept a friendly challenge to a feat of memory. One day, in the boardroom of the British Museum, Sir David Dundas saw him hand to Lord Aberdeen a sheet of foolscap covered with writing arranged in three parallel columns down each of the four pages. This document, of which the ink was still wet, proved to be a full list

of the senior wranglers at Cambridge, with their dates and colleges, for the hundred years during which the names of senior wranglers had been recorded in the University Calendar. On another occasion Sir David asked, "Macaulay, do you know your popes?" "No," was the answer; "I always get wrong among the Innocents." "But can you say your Archbishops of Canterbury?" "Any fool," said Macaulay, "could say his Archbishops of Canterbury backward;" and he went off at a score, drawing breath only once to remark on the oddity of there having been both an Archbishop Sancroft and an Archbishop Bancroft, until Sir David stopped him at Cranmer.—G. O. TREVELYAN ("Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay"). *Feats of memory.*

Macaulay recited the greater part of the "Lay of the Last Minstrel" after reading it for the first time. He used to say, and he was by no means a boastful man, that if by any chance all the existing copies of Milton were to be destroyed he thought he could replace the first six books of "Paradise Lost" from memory. . . . "Macaulay," said Sydney Smith, "can you recite the list of Popes?"—"No," confessed Macaulay, "I get confused with the Johns and Gregories." "Well," said Hallam, who was present, "can you manage the Archbishops of Canterbury?"—"The Archbishops of Canterbury!" was the disdainful reply, "any fool can recite his Archbishops of Canterbury backwards." And he began, from Howley back to Pole, when his hearers declared themselves satisfied.—GRENVILLE MURRAY ("Personal Reminiscences," published in the *Swiss Times*, 1881). *Memory.*

Rapid memorizing.

Trevelyan quotes from a letter written by Macaulay in 1857, about two years before his death: "I walked in the portico, and learned by heart the noble fourth act of the 'Merchant of Venice.' There are four hundred lines, of which I knew a hundred and fifty. I made myself perfect master of the whole, the prose letter included, in two hours." So we see that he was able, in his fifty-eighth year, to commit to memory one hundred and twenty-five lines an hour—a little more than two lines a minute.

Linguistic studies.

March 30, 1831.—Tom has just left us, after a very interesting conversation. He spoke of his extreme idleness. He said, "I never knew such an idle man as I am. When I go in to Empon or Ellis his tables are always covered with books and papers. I cannot stick at anything for above a day or two. I mustered industry enough to teach myself Italian. I wish to speak Spanish. I know I could master the difficulties in a week, and read any book in the language at the end of a month, but I have not the courage to attempt it."—(Extract from the Journal of Margaret Macaulay.)

My way of learning a language is always to begin with the Bible, which I can read without a dictionary. After a few days passed in this way, I am master of all the common particles, the common rules of syntax, and a pretty large vocabulary. Then I fall on some good classical work. It was in this way that I learned both Spanish and Portuguese, and I shall try the same course with German.—Lord Macaulay (extract from a letter).

There are people who can carry on twenty works at a time. . . . But I am of a different temper. I never write to please myself until my subject has for the time driven away every other out of my head. When I turn from one work to another, a great deal of time is lost in the mere transition.—Lord Macaulay ("Correspondence of Macvey Napier").

One work at a time.

Whenever one of his books was passing through the press, Macaulay extended his indefatigable industry and his scrupulous precision to the minutest mechanical drudgery of the literary calling. There was no end to the trouble that he devoted to matters which most authors are only too glad to leave to the care and experience of their publisher. He could not rest until the lines were level to a hair's breadth, and the punctuation correct to a comma. —G. O. Trevelyan ("Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay").

Solicitude about his works.

During an epoch when, at our principal seats of education, athletic pursuits are regarded as a leading object of existence, rather than as a means of health and recreation, it requires some boldness to confess that Macaulay was utterly destitute of bodily accomplishments, and that he viewed his deficiencies with supreme indifference. He could neither swim, nor row, nor drive, nor skate, nor shoot. He seldom crossed a saddle, and never willingly. When in attendance at Windsor, as a cabinet minister, he was informed that a horse was at his disposal. "If her majesty wishes to see me ride," he said, "she

No bodily accomplishments save walking.

must order out an elephant." The only exercise in which he can be said to have excelled was that of threading crowded streets with his eyes fixed upon a book. He might be seen in such thoroughfares as Oxford Street and Cheapside, walking as fast as other people walked, and reading a great deal faster than any body else could read. As a pedestrian he was indeed above the average. Till he had passed fifty, he thought nothing of going on foot from the Albany to Clapham, and from Clapham on to Greenwich, and, while still in the prime of life, he was forever on his feet indoors as well as out.—G. O. TREVELYAN ("Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay").

No bodily accomplishments save walking.

Macaulay's predilection for the Muse of the street, has already furnished more than one anecdote to the newspapers. It is, indeed, one of the few personal facts about him which up to this time have taken hold of the public imagination. He bought every halfpenny song on which he could lay his hands; if only it was decent, and a genuine, undoubted poem of the people. He has left a scrap-book containing about eighty ballads; for the most part vigorous and picturesque enough, however defective they may be in rhyme and grammar. . . . It is not too much to say that Macaulay knew the locality, and, at this period of his life, the stock in trade, of every book-stall in London.—G. O. TREVELYAN ("Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay").

Street ballads and book-stall literature.

In the correspondence of Macvey Napier there is a letter which is worth quoting in illustration of

Macaulay's magnanimity. He writes to Mr. Napier, in January, 1841, being at that time Secretary at War in Lord Melbourne's Cabinet :

Fair play.

"I think the new life of Hastings the worst book that I ever saw. I should be inclined to treat it mercilessly were it not that the writer, though I never saw him, is in some sense placed officially under me. And I think there would be something like tyranny and insolence in pouring contempt on a person who has a situation from which I could, for aught I know, have him dismissed, and in which I could certainly make him very uneasy. It would be far too Crokerish a proceeding for me to strike a man who would find some difficulty in retaliating. I shall, therefore, speak of him much less sharply than he deserves, unless indeed we should be out, which is not improbable. In that case, I should, of course be quite at liberty."

Macaulay's opinion of the political situation proved to be accurate, for in the succeeding summer the government of Lord Melbourne gave place to that of Sir Robert Peel, and, unhappily for Mr. Gleig, the reviewer was now "quite at liberty," and made use of his freedom in the *Edinburgh Review*, of October, 1841, as follows :

"This book seems to have been manufactured in pursuance of a contract, by which the representatives of Warren Hastings, on the one part, bound themselves to furnish papers, and Mr. Gleig, on the other part, bound himself to furnish praise. It is but just to say that the covenants on both sides have been most faithfully kept ; and the result is before us in the form of three big bad volumes, full

of undigested correspondence and undiscerning panegyric."

Ready to fight a duel.

Although Macaulay was never engaged in a duel, Trevelyan shows that he was at one time quite ready to engage in one. A Mr. Wallace, had written of Sir James Mackintosh in a way which excited Macaulay's wrath. He assailed Mr. Wallace, in a review, with such violence that Wallace sent him a challenge. Macaulay wrote to Macvey Napier, in 1838, "Your old friend Wallace and I have been pretty near exchanging shots. . . . I had, to tell you the truth, no notion that a meeting could be avoided." The matter was amicably arranged, by the efforts of friends, who proved the truth of Touchstone's observation, "Your *if* is your only peacemaker, much virtue in *if*;" but the fact remains that Macaulay was prepared to risk his life in a duel.

Cares and responsibilities.

The prosperity of the house of Macaulay Babington was short-lived. . . . In 1819, the first indications of possible disaster begin to show themselves in the letters to and from Cambridge; while waiting for a fellowship, Macaulay was glad to make a hundred guineas by taking pupils; and, as time went on, it became evident that he was to be an eldest son only in the sense that throughout the coming years of difficulty and distress his brothers and sisters would depend mainly upon him for comfort, guidance, and support. He acknowledged the claim cheerfully, lovingly, and indeed almost unconsciously. It was not in his disposition to murmur over what was inevitable, or to plume himself upon

doing what was right. He quietly took up the burden which his father was unable to bear ; and, before many years had elapsed, the fortunes of all for whom he considered himself responsible were abundantly assured. In the course of the efforts which he expended on the accomplishment of this result, he unlearned the very notion of framing his method of life with a view to his own pleasure ; and such was his high and simple nature that it may well be doubted whether it ever crossed his mind that to live wholly for others was a sacrifice at all.—G. O. TREVELYAN ("Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay").

Cares and responsibilities.

The feelings with which Macaulay regarded children were near akin to those of the great writer to whom we owe the death of little Paul, and the meeting between the school-boy and his mother in the eighth chapter of "David Copperfield." "Have you seen the first number of Dombey?" he writes. "There is not much in it ; but there is one passage which made me cry as if my heart would break. It is the description of a little girl who has lost an affectionate mother, and is unkindly treated by every body. Images of that sort always overpower me, even when the artist is less skilful than Dickens." In truth, Macaulay's extreme sensibility to all which appealed to the sentiment of pity, whether in art or in nature, was nothing short of a positive inconvenience to him. He was so moved by the visible representation of distressing scenes that he went most unwillingly to the theatre, for which during his Cambridge days he had entertained a passionate though passing fondness. I remember well how,

Sensibility.

Sensibility.

during the performance of "Masks and Faces," the sorrows of the broken-down author and his starving family in their Grub Street garret, entirely destroyed the pleasure which he otherwise would have taken in Mrs. Stirling's admirable acting. And he was hardly less affected to tears by that which was sublime and stirring in literature, than by that which was melancholy and pathetic. In August, 1851, he writes from Malvern to his niece Margaret: "I finished the 'Iliad' to day. I had not read it through since the end of 1837, when I was at Calcutta. . . . I never admired the old fellow so much, or was so strongly moved by him. . . . I read the last five books at a stretch during my walk to-day, and was at last forced to turn into a by-path, lest the parties of walkers should see me blubbering for imaginary beings."—G. O. TREVELYAN ("Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay").

Simplicity.

Macaulay was so devoid of egotism, and exacted so little deference and attention from those with whom he lived, that the young people around him were under an illusion which to this day it is pleasant to recall. It was long, very long, before we guessed that the world thought much of one who appeared to think so little of himself. I remember telling my school-fellows that I had an uncle who was about to publish a "History of England" in two volumes, each containing six hundred and fifty pages; but it never crossed my mind that the work in question would have anything to distinguish it except its length. As years went on, it seemed strange and unnatural to hear him more and more

frequently talked of as a great man ; and we slowly, and almost reluctantly, awoke to the conviction that "Uncle Tom" was cleverer, as well as more good-natured than his neighbors.—G. O. TREVELYAN ("Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay"). *Simplicity.*

The fun that went on at Great Ormond Street was of a jovial, and sometimes uproarious, description. Even when the family was by itself, the school-room and the drawing-room were full of young people ; and friends and cousins flocked in numbers to a resort where so much merriment was perpetually on foot. There were seasons during the school holidays when the house overflowed with noise and frolic from morning to night ; and Macaulay, who at any period of his life could literally spend whole days in playing with children, was master of the innocent revels. Games of hide-and-seek, that lasted for hours, with shouting, and the blowing of horns up and down stairs and through every room, were varied by ballads, which, like the scalds of old, he composed during the act of recitation, while the others struck in with the chorus. He had no notion whatever of music, but an infallible ear for rhythm. His knack of improvisation he at all times exercised freely. The verses which he thus produced, and which he invariably attributed to an anonymous author whom he styled, "the Judicious Poet," were exclusively for home consumption. . . . *Home revels.*

He did not play upon words as a habit, nor did he interlard his talk with far-fetched or over-strained witticisms. His humor, like his rhetoric, was full

Home revels.

of force and substance, and arose naturally from the complexion of the conversation or the circumstance of the moment. But when alone with his sisters, and, in after years, with his nieces, he was fond of setting himself deliberately to manufacture conceits resembling those on the heroes of the Trojan war which have been thought worthy of publication in the collected works of Swift. When walking in London he would undertake to give some droll tune to the name of every shopkeeper in the street, and, when travelling, to the name of every station along the line. At home he would run through the countries of Europe, the States of the Union, the chief cities of our Indian Empire, the provinces of France, the prime ministers of England, or the chief writers and artists of any given country; striking off puns, admirable, endurable, and execrable, but all irrisistibly laughable, which followed each other in showers like sparks from flint. Capping verses was a game of which he never tired. "In the spring of 1829," says his cousin, Mrs. Connybeare, "we were staying in Ormond Street. My chief recollection of your uncle during that visit is on the evenings when we capped verses. All the family were quick at it, but his astounding memory made him supereminent. When the time came for him to be off to bed at his chambers, he would rush out of the room after uttering some long-sought line, and would be pursued to the top of the stairs by one of the others who had contrived to recall a verse which served the purpose, in order that he might not leave the house victorious; but he, with the hall-door open in his hand, would shriek back a crowning effort,

and go off triumphant."—G. O. TREVELYAN ("Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay").

Life with his sisters.

He resided with his father at Cadogan Place, and accompanied him when, under the pressure of pecuniary circumstances, he removed to a less fashionable quarter of the town. In 1823 he settled in Great Ormond Street. . . . Here the Macaulays remained till 1831. "Those were to me," says Lady Trevelyan, "years of intense happiness. There might be money troubles, but they did not touch us. Our lives were passed after a fashion which would seem, indeed, strange to the present generation." . . .

"In the morning there was some pretence of work and study. In the afternoon your uncle always took my sister Margaret and myself a long walk. We traversed every part of the City, Islington, Clerkenwell, and the parks, returning just in time for a six-o'clock dinner. What anecdotes he used to pour out about every street, and square, and court, and alley! There are many places I never pass without the tender grace of a day that is dead coming back to me. Then, after dinner, he always walked up and down the drawing-room between us chatting till tea-time. Our noisy mirth, his wretched puns, so many a minute, so many an hour! Then we sung, none of us having any voices, and he, if possible, least of all; but still the old nursery songs were set to music and chanted. My father, sitting at his own table, used to look up occasionally, and push back his spectacles, and, I daresay, wonder, in his heart, how we could so

Life with his sisters.

waste our time. After tea the book then in reading was produced. Your uncle very seldom read aloud himself of an evening, but walked about listening, and commenting, and drinking water."— G. O. TREVELYAN ("Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay").

Fondness for children.

It is impossible to exaggerate the pleasure which Macaulay took in children, or the delight which he gave them. He was, beyond all comparison, the best of playfellows; unrivalled in the invention of games, and never wearied of repeating them. He had an inexhaustible repertory of small dramas for the benefit of his nieces, in which he sustained an endless variety of parts with a skill that, at any rate, was sufficient for his audience. An old friend of the family writes to my sister, Lady Holland; "I well remember that there was one never-failing game of building up a den with newspapers behind the sofa, and of enacting robbers and tigers; you shrieking with terror, but always fascinated, and begging him to begin again; and there was a daily recurring observation from him, that, after all, children were the only true poets."—G. O. TREVELYAN ("Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay").

Sight-seeing.

Among other tastes which he had in common with children was an avidity for sight-seeing. . . . He was never so happy as when he could spend an afternoon in taking his nephews and nieces a round of London sights, until, to use his favorite expression, they "could not drag one leg after the other." If he had been able to have his own way, the treat

would have recurred at least twice a week. On these occasions we drove into London in time for a sumptuous midday meal, at which everything we liked best was accompanied by oysters, caviare, and olives, some of which delicacies he invariably provided with the sole object of seeing us reject them with contemptuous disgust. Then off we set under his escort, in summer to the bears and lions; in winter to the Panorama of Waterloo, to the Colosseum in Regent's Park, or to the enjoyment of the delicious terror inspired by Madame Tussaud's Chamber of Horrors. When the more attractive exhibitions had been exhausted by too frequent visits, he would enliven with his irrepressible fun the dreary propriety of the Polytechnic, or would lead us through the lofty corridors of the British Museum, making the statues live and the busts speak by the spirit and color of his innumerable anecdotes.—G. O. TREVELYAN ("Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay").

Sight-seeing.

Regularly every Easter, when the closing of the public offices drove my father from the Treasury for a brief holiday, Macaulay took our family on a tour among cathedral-towns, varied by an occasional visit to the universities. We started on the Thursday; spent Good Friday in one city and Easter Sunday in another, and went back to town on the Monday. . . . "Our party just filled a railway carriage," says Lady Trevelyan, "and the journey found his flow of spirits unfailing. It was a return to old times; a running fire of jokes, rhymes, puns, never ceasing. It was a peculiarity of his that he

Holiday excursions.

Holiday excursions.

never got tired on a journey. As the day wore on he did not feel the desire to lie back and be quiet, and he liked to find his companions ready to be entertained to the last."—G. O. TREVELYAN ("Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay").

Management of pecuniary affairs.

Macaulay so arranged his affairs that their management was to him a pastime, instead of a source of annoyance and anxiety. His economical maxims were of the simplest—to treat official and literary gains as capital, and to pay all bills within the twenty-four hours. . . . Like other men who have more money than time, his only account-book was that which his banker kept for him; and to assist himself in making up his yearly balance-sheet, he embodied a list of his investments, and the main items of his expenditure, in a couple of irregular, but not inharmonious, stanzas.

"North-west; South-west; South-east; Two Irish Greats;
Denmark; Bengal; Commercial; London Dock;
Insurance; Steamships; and United States;
Slave-state; and Free-state; and Old English Stock.

Taxes; Rent; Sisters; Carriage; Wages; Clo'es;
Coals; Wine; Alms; Pocket-cash; Subscriptions; Treats;
Bills, weekly these, and miscellaneous those.
Travel the list completes."

The wealth which Macaulay gathered prudently he spent royally; if to spend royally is to spend on others rather than on yourself. From the time that he began to feel the money in his purse, almost every page in his diary contains evidence of his inexhaustible, and sometimes rather carelessly regu-

lated, generosity.—G. O. TREVELYAN ("Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay").

He was more than generous in money matters; of a princely munificence in fact. Many a gentlemanly beggar called on him in his rooms at the Albany; and none ever went away without at least a guinea. One day a person of decidedly "seedy" aspect, called and unfolded a long story of sorrow. Macaulay listened, only half-touched, having good reasons for taking his own view of the case. He had already made up his mind to dismiss the seedy gentleman with an alms when the latter observed incidentally that he was a Trinity man. Macaulay thereupon wrote him a cheque for £100 straight off. And yet a hundred pounds was a very serious consideration to him at that time. Indeed the gift put his whole year's accounts out of gear.—GRENVILLE MURRAY (*Swiss Times*, 1881). *Generosity.*

Within his own household he was positively worshipped, and with good reason; for Sir Walter Scott himself was not a kinder master. He cheerfully and habitually submitted to those petty sacrifices by means of which an unselfish man can do so much to secure the comfort and to earn the attachment of those who are around him; marching off in all weathers to his weekly dinner at the club, in order to give his servants their Sunday evening; going far out of his way to make such arrangements as would enable them to enjoy and to prolong their holidays; or permitting them, if so they preferred, to entertain their relations under his roof for a month to- *A good master.*

gether. "To-day," he says, "William and Elizabeth went off to fetch William's father. As I write, here come my travellers; the old man with a stick. Well? It is good to give pleasure and show sympathy. There is no vanity in saying that I am a good master."—G. O. TREVELYAN ("Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay").

A good master.

The hospitality at Holly Lodge had about it a flavor of pleasant peculiarity. Macaulay was no epicure on his own account. In his Reform Bill days, as many passages in his letters show, he enjoyed a banquet at the house of a Cabinet minister or a city magnate with all the zest of a hungry undergraduate; but there never was a time when his daily wants would not have been amply satisfied by a couple of eggs with his coffee in the morning, and a dinner such as is served at a decent sea-side lodging house. He could not, however, endure to see guests, even of the most tender age, seated round his board, unless there was upon it something very like a feast. He generally selected, by a half-conscious preference, dishes of an established, and if so it may be called, an historical reputation. He was fond of testifying to his friendliness for Dissenters by treating his friends to a fillet of veal, which he maintained to be the recognized Sunday dinner in good old Non-conformist families. He liked still better to prove his loyalty to the Church by keeping her feasts, and keeping them in good company; and by observing her fasts, so far, that is to say, as they could be observed by making additions to the ordinary bill of fare. A Michaelmas-day on which he did

An unselfish epicure.

not eat goose, or ate it in solitude, was no Michaelmas-day to him; and regularly on Christmas-eve there came to our house a cod-fish, a barrel of oysters, and a chine, accompanied by the heaviest turkey which diligence could discover and money could purchase. If he were entertaining a couple of schoolboys who could construe their fourth satire of Juvenal, he would reward them for their proficiency with a dish of mullet that might have passed muster on the table of an augur or an emperor's freedman. If he succeeded in gathering a party of his own Cambridge contemporaries, he took care that they should have no cause to remember with regret the Trinity butteries.—G. O. TREVELYAN ("Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay").

An unselfish epicure.

"Last July was a crisis in my life," he writes in March, 1853. "I became twenty years older in a week. A mile is more to me now than ten miles a year ago." In the winter that followed his re-election at Edinburgh he had a severe attack of bronchitis; and during all his remaining years he suffered from confirmed asthma, and was tormented by frequent and distressing fits of violent coughing. One after another, in quick succession, his favorite habits were abandoned, without any prospect of being resumed. . . . It might have been expected that he would have made his private journal the safety-valve for that querulousness which an egotist vents upon his relatives, and a self-conscious author upon his readers. But as each birthday and each New-Year's recurs, instead of peevishly mourning over the blessings which had departed from him, he

Failing health.

Failing health.

records in manly terms his gratitude for those that have been left to him. . . . Instead of murmuring and repining, we find him exhorting himself to work while it was day, and to increase his exertions as the sand sunk ever lower in the glass; rescuing some from the poverty from which he long ago had set himself free, and consoling others for the pangs of disappointed ambition from which he had never suffered; providing the young people around him only too lavishly with the pleasures that he could no longer enjoy, and striving by every possible method to make their lives all the brighter, as the shadows deepened down upon his own. To admit the world unreservedly behind the scenes of Macaulay's life would be an act which the world itself would blame; but those who have special reason to cherish his memory may be allowed to say, that, proud as they are of his brilliant and elaborate compositions, which in half a score of languages have been the delight of a million readers, they set a still higher value upon the careless pages of that diary which testifies how, through seven years of trying and constant illness, he maintained his industry, his courage, his patience, and his benevolence unimpaired and unbroken to the last.—G. O. TREVELYAN ("Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay").

A "cynic's" tribute.

One paper I have read regarding Lord Macaulay says "he had no heart." Why a man's books may not always speak the truth, but they speak his mind in spite of himself: and it seems to me this man's heart is beating through every page he penned.

A "cynic's" tribute.

He is always in a storm of revolt and indignation against wrong, craft, tyranny. How he cheers heroic resistance ; how he backs and applauds freedom struggling for its own ; how he hates scoundrels, ever so victorious and successful ; how he recognizes genius, though selfish villains possess it ! The critic who says Macaulay had no heart, might say that Johnson had none ; and two men more generous, and more loving, and more hating, and more partial, and more noble, do not live in our history. Those who knew Lord Macaulay knew how admirably tender and generous, and affectionate he was. It was not his business to bring his family before the theatre footlights, and call for bouquets from the gallery as he wept over them.—W. M. THACKERAY ("Roundabout Papers").

REV. SYDNEY SMITH.

1771–1845.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

THERE are two strongly contrasted periods in the life of Sydney Smith—that of his long residence in the country, and that of his subsequent career in town. In Yorkshire he patiently devotes himself to the sober duties of a country clergyman. He leads a retired life, occasionally enlivened by brief visits to Edinburgh, or London, but chiefly filled with parochial work, domestic cares, and the cultivation of his land—a concern in which no member of his congregation has a livelier or more practical interest. In London he takes a distinguished place in the world of literature and politics. Among brilliant men, he shines as the first wit of his time. Authors recognize the power of his acute, though somewhat merciless, criticism. Statesmen take counsel with him upon vital questions of national policy, and seek his aid in issues of the gravest importance. As the rector of an obscure parish, and as the famous and honored Canon of St. Paul's, he is equally worthy of respect. Under both conditions he bore himself gallantly, and his success in positions which differed so widely illustrates the stability of his character and the broad scope of his abilities.

Unlike some famous wits, he did not reserve his

fun for chosen companies and stated occasions. It overflowed abundantly in his family life, extending even to creatures unable to appreciate it—to the sluggish old horse, "Calamity," and to the wondering donkeys, whose heads he adorned with stately antlers.

His zest for life, his intense delight in all sources of enjoyment, and the exuberance of his animal spirits, made him an unequalled companion. He quickened and exhilarated all around him by his own vitality. Those blue devils must needs have been double-dyed, whom his society should not transform into merry Pucks or sprightly Ariels. His laughter was far removed from the crackling of thorns under a pot; for the brilliant qualities which sparkled so gayly were in closest alliance with good sense and right feeling. The conduct of his life was guided by sound principles, and showed the controlling power of a pure and vigorous moral nature.

Had it not been so, had he lacked the restraining and ennobling influence of a high morality, we can see, remembering the manners of the age, how easily a man of his convivial and pleasure-loving nature might have sunk into a vulgar, fox-hunting parson; cracking coarse jokes with loutish squires; a riotous six-bottle man, living in constant danger of public disgrace and summary ejectment from a position for which he was totally unfit.

A character something akin to this was actually imputed to him—so far did partisan malignity extend! The Tories sought to depreciate their formidable opponent, by affecting to consider him a

loose liver and a mere buffoon. But, although there are some apocryphal stories discreditable to him, there is no trustworthy evidence that he forgot the claims of self-respect, or in any way compromised the intrinsic worth and dignity of his moral character. Unquestionably, his disregard for some of the wholly conventional proprieties stood in the way of his preferment. The Whig ministry, unduly cautious, might well have shown more confidence in the discretion of their faithful ally. They need not have feared to make him a bishop. He would have done nothing to ruffle the lawn.

He wished to be a lawyer, and took orders somewhat reluctantly. If he had followed his own inclination, the legal profession would almost certainly have opened his way to the political career for which he was so eminently qualified. His decision, however, can hardly be regretted. By it, indeed, he probably lost some personal distinction, and the state undoubtedly lost a valuable servant ; yet he had an ample measure of success and happiness, and the church was substantially enriched by gaining a man, who showed, as such worthies as Latimer, South, and Fuller had shown, that free-hearted mirth, and rollicking, uproarious jollity were entirely compatible with a devout faith ; who exemplified the consistency of sincere piety with a keen enjoyment of material comforts ; whose hearty nature had not a vestige of cant ; and whose truly temperate life was undisfigured by either monkish or puritanic asceticism.

The life of Sydney Smith was written by his daughter, Lady Holland, and was published with

a collection of his letters, edited by Mrs. Sarah Austin. These volumes were really quite distinct from each other, although published as one work, and might with equal propriety have been issued separately. In the "Franklin Square Library" an abridgment of them has been published, so arranged as to weld the two books into one, by transferring the letters to their appropriate places in the narrative. The able and comprehensive biography, recently published, which its author, Mr. Stuart J. Reid, modestly calls "A Sketch of the Life and Times of the Rev. Sydney Smith," will undoubtedly take rank as the foremost authority—despite Mr. Reid's assertion that his book "is intended to supplement, and not to rival, the biography which is before the world." There is an excellent biographical memoir, of considerable length, in Evert A. Duyckinck's "Wit and Wisdom of Sydney Smith." Interesting matter will also be found in the "Greville Memoirs;" Moore's "Diary;" Harriet Martineau's "Autobiography;" and Charles R. Leslie's "Autobiographical Recollections."

LEADING EVENTS OF SYDNEY SMITH'S LIFE.

1771. Born, June 3d, at Woodford, in Essex.
1782.—(Aged 11.) A scholar at Winchester.
1789.—(Aged 18.) At Oxford University.
1794.—(Aged 23.) Takes orders. Becomes the Curate of Nether Avon in Wiltshire.
1798.—(Aged 27.) Goes to Edinburgh as a private tutor.
1800.—(Aged 29.) Marries Miss Catherine Amelia Pybus. Publishes his first book, a volume of sermons.
1802.—(Aged 31.) Edits the first number of the *Edinburgh Review.*

1803.—(Aged 32.) Removes with his family to London.
1804.—(Aged 33.) Lectures upon Moral Philosophy before the Royal Institution, London.
1807.—(Aged 36.) Publishes "Letters of Peter Plymley."
1809.—(Aged 38.) Becomes rector of Foston-le-Clay. Removes with his family to Heslington in Yorkshire.
1814.—(Aged 43.) Moves into his rectory at Foston.
1827.—(Aged 56.) Publishes his last contribution to the *Edinburgh Review.*
1828.—(Aged 57.) Becomes Canon of Bristol Cathedral.
1829.—(Aged 58.) Removes with his family to Combe Florey, in Somersetshire.
1831.—(Aged 60.)[1] Becomes Canon of St. Paul's Cathedral. Delivers the "Dame Partington" speech at Taunton.
1845.—(Aged 73 years and 8 months.) Dies, February 22d.

[1] From this year until his death a large part of Sydney Smith's time was passed in London, although he retained his home at Combe Florey.

REV. SYDNEY SMITH.

THE peculiarities and talents of the young Smiths were very early evinced; their mother describes them as neglecting games, seizing every hour of leisure for study, and often lying on the floor, stretched over their books, discussing with loud voice and most vehement gesticulation, every point that arose—often subjects above their years—and arguing them with a warmth and fierceness as if life and death hung on the issue.—LADY HOLLAND ("Memoirs of Sydney Smith").[1] *Childhood.*

Even in old age he used to shudder at the recollections of Winchester, and I have heard him speak with horror of the misery of the years he spent there. . . . However, in spite of hunger and neglect, he rose in due time to be Captain of the school; and while there, received, together with his brother Courtenay, a most flattering but involuntary compliment from his school-fellows, who signed a round-robin, "refusing to try for the College prizes if the Smiths were allowed to contend for them any more, *At school.*

[1] Holland (Saba, Lady). Memoirs of Sydney Smith. With Selections from his Letters, by Mrs. Sarah Austin. 2 vols., 8vo. London, 1855.

as they always gained them." . . . He was not only leader in learning, but in mischief, and was discovered inventing a catapult by lamp-light, and commended for his ingenuity by the master, who little dreamed it was intended to capture a neighboring turkey, whose well-filled crop had long attracted the attention, and awakened the desires of the hungry urchins.—LADY HOLLAND ("Memoirs of Sydney Smith").

At school.

The personal appearance of Sydney Smith . . . was certainly not dignified; it was, in a word, "jolly." There was a roll in his gait when in the pulpit, which an unfriendly observer might have described as "rollicking," and in general society his chief object seemed to be "fun."—S. C. HALL ("Book of Memories").

Personal appearance.

Sydney Smith was of portly figure, stout, indeed clumsy, with a healthy look and a self-enjoying aspect. He was rapid in movements as well as in words, and evidently studied ease more than dignity. In his youth a college friend used to say to him, "Sydney, your sense, wit, and clumsiness always give me the idea of an Athenian carter." And certainly in his age those who saw or conversed with him as a stranger would have little thought that he was a dignitary of the Church and a Canon of St. Paul's.—S. C. HALL ("Book of Memories").

January, 1819.—Sydney Smith . . . was in one respect the soul of the society.[1] I never saw a

[1] The society of Holland House.

man so formed to float down the stream of conversation, and, without seeming to have any direct influence upon it, to give it his own hue and charm. He is about fifty, corpulent, but not gross, with a great fund of good-nature, and would be thought by a person who saw him only once, and transiently, merely a gay, easy gentleman, careless of everything but the pleasures of conversation and society. This would be a great injustice to him, and one that offends him, I am told; for, notwithstanding the easy grace and light playfulness of his wit, which comes forth with unexhausted and inexhaustible facility, and reminded me continually of the phosphoric brilliancy of the ocean, which sparkles more brightly in proportion as the force opposed to it is greater, yet he is a man of much culture, with plain good-sense, a sound, discreet judgment, and remarkably just and accurate habits of reasoning, and values himself upon these, as well as on his admirable humor. This is an union of opposite qualities, such as nature usually delights to hold asunder, and such as makes him, whether in company or alone, an irresistibly amusing companion; for, while his humor gives such grace to his argument that it comes with the charm of wit, and his wit is so appropriate that its sallies are often logic in masquerade, his good-sense and good-nature are so prevalent that he never, or rarely, offends against the proprieties of life or society, and never says anything that he or anybody else need to regret afterwards.—GEORGE TICKNOR ("Life and Letters of G. Ticknor").[1]

Conversation.

[1] Ticknor (George). Life, Letters, and Journals. 2 vols., 8vo. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co. 1876.

Conversation.

The first remark that I made to myself, after listening to Mr. Sydney Smith's conversation, was, that if he had not been known as the wittiest man of his day, he would have been accounted one of the wisest.—EDWARD EVERETT (quoted in Lady Holland's "Memoirs of Sydney Smith").

April 10, 1823.—Dined at Rogers's. . . . Smith particularly amusing. Have rather held out against him hitherto; but this day he conquered me; and I now am his victim, in the laughing way, for life. His imagination of a duel between two doctors, with oil of croton on the tips of their fingers, trying to touch each other's lips, highly ludicrous. What Rogers says, of Smith, very true, that whenever the conversation is getting dull, he throws in some touch which makes it rebound, and rise again as light as ever.—THOMAS MOORE ("Diary").[1]

Character of his fun.

The special and reportable sallies of Sydney Smith have been, of course, often repeated, but the fanciful fun and inexhaustible humorous drollery of his conversation among his intimates can never be adequately rendered or reproduced. He bubbled over with mirth, of which his own enjoyment formed an irresistible element, he shook, and his eyes glistened at his own ludicrous ideas, as they dawned upon his brain; and it would be impossible to convey the slightest idea of the genial humor of his habitual talk by merely repeating separate witticisms and repartees.—FRANCES ANN KEMBLE ("Records of Later Life").

[1] Moore (Thomas). Memoirs, Journal, and Correspondence. Edited by Lord John Russell. 8 vols., 8vo. London, 1853–56.

I at this time (1832) became acquainted with Sydney Smith, through my friend Newton. His wit and humor were always unpremeditated, and seemed not so much the result of efforts to amuse, as the overflowing of a mind full of imagery, instantly ready to combine with whatever passed in conversation. His very exaggerations took away the sting of his most personal witticisms, and I suppose no man was ever so amusing with so little offence; for those who were the subjects of his jokes were often the most ready to relate them.—C. R. LESLIE ("Autobiographical Recollections").[1]

His humor unpremeditated.

His great delight was to produce a succession of ludicrous images: these followed each other with a rapidity that scarcely left time to laugh; he himself laughing louder and with more enjoyment than any one. This electric contact of mirth came and went with the occasion; it cannot be repeated or reproduced. Any thing would give occasion to it. For instance, having seen in the newspapers that Sir Æneas Mackintosh was come to town, he drew such a ludicrous caricature of Sir Æneas and Lady Dido, for the amusement of their namesake, that Sir James Mackintosh rolled on the floor in fits of laughter, and Sydney Smith, striding across him, exclaimed "Ruat Justitia!"—LORD JOHN RUSSELL (Preface to "Moore's Diary").

Uproarious play.

Mrs. Marat writes: "Mr. Smith was talking after breakfast with Dr. Marat, in a very impressive and serious tone, on scientific subjects, and I was admir-

[1] Leslie (Charles Robert). Autobiographical Recollections. Edited by Tom Taylor. 2 vols., 12mo. London, 1860.

Sense and nonsense.

ing the enlarged and philosophic manner in which he discoursed on them, when suddenly starting up, he stretched out his arms and said, 'Come, now let us talk a little nonsense,' and then came such a flow of wit, and joke, and anecdote, such a burst of spirits, such a charm and freshness of manner, such an irresistible laugh, that Solomon himself would have yielded to the infection, and called out, 'Nonsense forever.'"—LADY HOLLAND ("Memoirs of Sydney Smith").

Characterizations of some friends.

Nothing could be droller than his description of all his friends in influenza, in the winter of 1832–3; and of these, Hallam was the drollest of all that I remember. "And poor Hallam was tossing and tumbling in his bed when the watchman came by and called, 'Twelve o'clock and a starlight night.' Here was an opportunity for controversy when it seemed most out of the question! Up jumped Hallam, with 'I question that,—I question that! Starlight! I see a star, I admit; but I doubt whether that constitutes starlight.' Hours more of tossing and tumbling; and then comes the watchman again: 'Past two o'clock, and a cloudy morning.' 'I question that,—I question that,' says Hallam. And he rushes to the window, and throws up the sash,—influenza notwithstanding. 'Watchman! do you mean to call this a cloudy morning? I see a star. And I question it's being past two o'clock:—I question it, I question it.'"—HARRIET MARTINEAU ("Autobiography").[1]

[1] Martineau (Harriet). Autobiography. Edited by M. W. Chapman. 2 vols., 8vo. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co. 1877.

One morning . . . a pompous little man, in rusty black, was ushered in. "May I ask what procures me the honor of this visit?" said my father. "Oh," said the little man, "I am compounding a history of the distinguished families in Somersetshire, and have called to obtain the Smith arms." "I regret sir," said my father, "not to be able to contribute to so valuable a work; but the Smiths never had any arms, and have invariably sealed their letters with their thumbs."—LADY HOLLAND ("Memoirs of Sydney Smith").

The Smith arms.

"It requires," he used to say, "a surgical operation to get a joke well into a Scotch understanding. . . . They are so imbued with metaphysics, that they even make love metaphysically; I overheard a young lady of my acquaintance, at a dance in Edinburgh, exclaim, in a sudden pause of the music, 'What you say, my Lord, is very true of love in the *aibstract*, but—' here the fiddlers began fiddling furiously, and the rest was lost."—LADY HOLLAND ("Memoirs of Sydney Smith").

Love and metaphysics.

Breakfasted at Rogers's: . . . Smith full of comicality and fancy. . . . In talking about the stories of dram-drinkers catching fire, pursued the idea in every possible shape. The inconvenience of a man coming too near the candle when he was speaking, "Sir, your observation has caught fire." Then imagined a parson breaking into a blaze in the pulpit; the engines called to put him out; no water to be had, the man at the waterworks being an Unitarian or an Atheist. Said of some one,

Spontaneous combustion.

"He has no command over his understanding; it is always getting between his legs and tripping him up."—THOMAS MOORE ("Diary").

A convenient assumption.

He was not . . . given to severe censure, but could convey it under light words when he chose; thus when he checked the strong old-fashioned freedom of speech in Lord Melbourne by suggesting that "they should assume every body and every thing to be damned, and come to the subject."—LORD HOUGHTON ("Monographs").[1]

The North Pole and the Equator.

Moore told a good story of Sydney Smith and Leslie the professor. Leslie had written upon the North Pole; something he had said had been attacked in the *Edinburgh Review* in a way that had displeased him. He called on Jeffrey just as he was getting on horseback, and in a great hurry, Leslie began with a grave complaint on the subject, which Jeffrey interrupted with "O damn the North Pole." Leslie went off in high dudgeon, and soon after met Sydney, who, seeing him disturbed, asked what was the matter. He told him what he had been to Jeffrey about, and that he had in a very unpleasant way said, "Damn the North Pole." "It was very bad," said Sydney; "but do you know, I am not surprised at it, for I have heard him speak very disrespectfully of *the Equator*."—CHARLES C. F. GREVILLE ("Memoirs").

Dining out on one occasion, he happened to meet Mr. ——, whom he always met with pleasure, as he

[1] Milnes (Richard Monckton, Lord Houghton). Monographs, Personal and Social. 12mo. London, 1873.

Roasting a Quaker.

was a man of sense, simplicity, and learning; and with such a total absence, not only of humor in himself but in his perception of it in others, as made him an amusing subject of speculation to my father.

The conversation at dinner took a liberal turn. My father in the full career of his spirits, happened to say, "Though he was not generally considered an illiberal man, yet he must confess he had one little weakness, one secret wish—he should like to *roast a Quaker*."

"Good heavens, Mr. Smith!" said Mr. ——, full of horror, "roast a Quaker?" "Yes, sir" (with the greatest gravity), "roast a Quaker!" "But do you consider, Mr. Smith, the torture?" "Yes, sir," said my father, "I have considered everything; it may be wrong, as you say: the Quaker would undoubtedly suffer acutely, but every one has his tastes —mine would be to roast a Quaker; one would satisfy me, only one; but it is one of those peculiarities I have striven against in vain, and I hope you will pardon my weakness."

Mr. ——'s honest simplicity could stand this no longer, and he seemed hardly able to sit at table with him. . . . At last my father, seeing that he was giving real pain, said, "Come, come, Mr. ——, since you think this so very illiberal, I must be wrong; and I will give up my roasted Quaker rather than your esteem; let us drink wine together." Peace was made, but I believe neither time nor explanation would ever have made him comprehend that it was a joke.—LADY HOLLAND ("Memoirs of Sydney Smith").

An impracticable marriage.

Some one mentioned that a young Scotchman, who had been lately in the neighborhood, was about to marry an Irish widow, double his age, and of considerable dimensions. "Going to marry her!" he exclaimed, bursting out laughing; "going to marry her! impossible! you mean, a part of her: he could not marry her all himself. It would be a case, not of bigamy, but of trigamy; the neighborhood or the magistrates should interfere. There is enough of her to furnish wives for the whole parish. One man marry her! it is monstrous. You might people a colony with her; or give an assembly with her; or perhaps take your morning's walk round her, always provided there were frequent resting-places, and you were in rude health. I once was rash enough to try walking round her before breakfast, but only got half-way, and gave it up exhausted. Or you might read the Riot Act, and disperse her; in short, you might do any thing with her but marry her."—LADY HOLLAND ("Memoirs of Sydney Smith").

Widow-burning extraordinary.

Newton told me that at a dinner-party at Lord Lyndhurst's, at which he was present, the conversation turned on the custom, in India, of widows burning themselves, an instance of which was recent. When the subject was pretty well exhausted, Smith began to defend the practice, asserting that no wife who truly loved her husband could wish to survive him.

"But if Lord Lyndhurst were to die, you would be sorry that Lady Lyndhurst should burn herself."

"Lady Lyndhurst," he replied, "would no doubt,

as an affectionate wife, consider it her duty to burn herself, but it would be our duty to put her out; and, as the wife of the Lord Chancellor, Lady Lyndhurst should not be put out like an ordinary widow. It should be a state affair. First, a procession of the judges, and then of the lawyers."

Widow-burning extra-ordinary.

"But where, Mr. Smith, are the clergy?"

"All gone to congratulate the new Chancellor."—C. R. Leslie ("Autobiographical Recollections").

Scarcely anything could be more misleading or unjnst than the persistent assertions, which have been freely made from time to time in certain quarters, concerning that license of speech which Sydney Smith is supposed to have allowed himself in regard to themes which no right-minded man can ever handle without the deepest reverence. It is satisfactory therefore to be able to declare that if there is one point more than another which has been brought into prominence in the course of the investigations which have led to this book, it is the remarkable unanimity with which those who knew him best declare that there was little or nothing—even in his most unguarded hours—to countenance such a view of his character.

His wit characterized by self-restraint and reverence.

It is admitted by those who are competent to give an opinion on the subject, that no person now living was better acquainted with Sydney Smith or stood higher in his regard, than his attached and valued friend, Mrs. Malcolm, who, as Miss Georgiana Harcourt, had constant opportunities during a long term of years of arriving at a correct impression concerning him. The accompanying estimate of the nature

of Sydney Smith's wit will therefore be read with pleasure, especially by those who are aware how singularly entitled Mrs. Malcolm is to speak on such a subject :—

67 Sloane Street, London, W.,
May 19, 1884.

Testimony of an old friend.

I have been asked, as an old and intimate friend of dear Sydney Smith, to give my impressions of his character on some points on which the world in general is much mistaken. It is too commonly imagined that he was merely a wit and humorist, clever in every way, but with little serious thought or feeling. This, however, was very far from the truth. His sense of fun was so great that he could not help sometimes making a joke on *ecclesiastical* subjects, but never on religious topics. Indeed, charming as his wit and humor were, we used to think him still more agreeable in his serious moods, when his conversation was most interesting and instructive. All his friends will be very thankful to see this phase of his character brought forward.

Georgiana Malcolm.

It is gratifying in this connection to be able to support such a statement with the authority of so keen and competent an observer as Lord Houghton, who assured the writer that he "never knew, except once, Sydney Smith to make a jest on any religious subject, and then he immediately withdrew his words, and seemed ashamed that he had uttered them."—Stuart J. Reid ("Life and Times of Sydney Smith").[1]

[1] Reid (Stuart J.). A Sketch of the Life and Times of the Rev. Sydney Smith. 8vo. London and New York, 1884.

It mattered not what the materials were : I never remember a dull dinner in his company. He extracted amusement from every subject, however hopeless. He descended and adapted himself to the meanest capacity, without seeming to do so ; he led without seeking to lead ; he never sought to shine—the light appeared because he could not help it. Nobody felt excluded. He had the happy art of always saying the best thing in the best manner to the right person at the right moment ; it was a touch-and-go impossible to describe, guided by such tact and attention to the feelings of others, that those he most attacked seemed most to enjoy the attack ; never in the same mood for two minutes together, and each mood seemed to be more agreeable than the last.—LADY HOLLAND ("Memoirs of Sydney Smith"). *Tact.*

He loved argument on serious and important subjects, but always after his own fashion ; throwing aside all extraneous matter, and by two or three pointed questions, marching up at once to the point. He argued with perfect temper in society, or if he saw the argument becoming long or warm, in a moment he dashed over his opponent's trenches, and was laughingly attacking him on some fresh point. —LADY HOLLAND ("Memoirs of Sydney Smith"). *As a disputant.*

On October 11th, 1831, upon the occasion of the rejection of the Reform Bill by the House of Lords, Sydney Smith addressed a great public meeting at Taunton. The following description, by a surviving witness of the event, Mr. Robert A. Kinglake, is *The "Dame Partington" speech.*

The "Dame Partington" speech.

given in Mr. Stuart J. Reid's recent volume upon Sydney Smith: "More than half a century has passed away, yet I see before me now the familiar figure of one whom 'wise men loved, and even wits admired;' as I beheld him entering the hall, I was struck with the calm dignity of his manner; the people respectfully made way for him as he passed, and seemed, as I thought, awed by his noble presence." . . .

"Just before Sydney Smith rose to speak, a foolish and violent reformer in the hall started to his feet, and cried out in a loud voice, 'If we don't have Reform directly, we will pull down that church!'—pointing to the beautiful Church of St. Mary Magdalen, the gem of Somerset—'we will pull it down and repair the roads with its stones.' No sooner were the words uttered than Sydney Smith calmly rose from his seat, and walked deliberately across the hall, and looking the man straight in the face, said in perfectly distinct and freezing tones of scorn, 'Your language, sir, is highly indecent.' The man immediately subsided, and I never afterwards saw him again in public.

"His speech was delivered in a clear and musical voice, and with all the fluency and grace of an accomplished orator; from first to last, he had complete command over his audience, and no one ventured to laugh until he issued his mandate. The introduction of the Partington storm was startling and unexpected, but as he recounted in felicitous terms the adventures of the excellent dame, suiting the action to the word with great dramatic skill, he commenced trundling his imaginary mop and sweep-

ing back the intrusive waves of the Atlantic, with an air of resolute determination, and an appearance of increasing temper.[1] The scene was realistic in the extreme, and was too much for the gravity of the most serious. . . . The house rose, the people cheered, and tears of superabundant laughter trickled down the cheeks of fair women and veteran Reformers."

The "Dame Partington" speech.

He read with great rapidity, . . . he galloped through the pages so rapidly, that we often laughed at him when he shut up a thick quarto as his morning's work, and said he meant he had looked at it, not read it. "Cross-examine me, then," said he; and we generally found he knew all that was worth knowing in it. . . . The same peculiarity char-

Methods of work.

[1] "As for the possibility of the House of Lords preventing ere long a reform of Parliament, I hold it to be the most absurd notion that ever entered into human imagination. I do not mean to be disrespectful, but the attempt of the Lords to stop Reform reminds me very forcibly of the great storm at Sidmouth, and of the conduct of the excellent Mrs. Partington on that occasion. In the winter of 1824 there set in a great flood upon that town—the tide rose to an incredible height—the waves rushed in upon the houses, and everything was threatened with destruction. In the midst of this sublime and terrible storm, Dame Partington, who lived upon the beach, was seen at the door of her house with mop and pattens, trundling her mop, squeezing out the sea-water, and vigorously pushing away the Atlantic Ocean. The Atlantic was roused. Mrs. Partington's spirit was up; but I need not tell you that the contest was unequal. The Atlantic Ocean beat Mrs. Partington. She was excellent at a slop or a puddle, but she should not have meddled with a tempest. Gentlemen, be at your ease—be quiet and steady—you will beat—Mrs. Partington."—*Extract from Sydney Smith's Speech at Taunton.*

acterized his compositions; when he had any subject in hand, he was indefatigable in reading, searching, inquiring, seeking every source of information, and discussing it with any man of sense or cultivation who crossed his path. But having once mastered it, he would sit down, and you might see him committing his ideas to paper with the same rapidity that they flowed out in his conversation—no hesitation, no erasions, no stopping to consider and round his periods. . . . One could see by his countenance how much he was interested or amused as fresh images came clustering round his pen; he hardly ever altered or corrected what he had written; . . . indeed, he was so impatient of this, that he could hardly bear the trouble of even looking over what he had written, but would not unfrequently throw the manuscript down on the table as soon as finished, and say, "*There*, it is done; now, Kate, do look it over, and put in dots to the *i*'s and strokes to the *t*'s"—and he would sally forth to his morning's walk. . . .

Methods of work.

After his evening walk he would sit down to his singular writing establishment, . . . and here, after looking through business papers and bills with as much plodding method as an attorney's clerk, he would suddenly push them all aside, and, as if to refresh his mind, take up his pen. His power of abstraction was so great that he would begin to compose, with as much rapidity and ease as another man would write a letter, those essays which are before the world, . . . often reading what he had written, . . . and this in the midst of all the conversation and interruptions of a family party,

with talking or music going on.—LADY HOLLAND ("Memoirs of Sydney Smith").

A family council was often held over his directions;[1] once, so entirely without success, that, after many endeavors on our part to decipher what they could be, as it seemed urgent, my mother cut out the passage and inclosed it to him; he returned it, saying, "he must decline ever reading his own handwriting four and twenty hours after he had written it."—LADY HOLLAND ("Memoirs of Sydney Smith"). *Handwriting.*

It was at Lord Murray's table that Sydney Smith told me of the fun the Edinburgh reviewers used to make of their work. I taxed him honestly with the mischief they had done by their ferocity and cruel levity at the outset. . . . "We *were* savage," replied Sydney Smith. "I remember" (and it was plain he could not help enjoying the remembrance) "how Brougham and I sat trying one night how we could exasperate our cruelty to the utmost. We had got hold of a poor nervous little vegetarian, who had put out a poor silly little book; and when we had done our review of it, we sat trying,"—(and here he joined his finger and thumb as if dropping from a phial) "to find one more chink, one more crevice, through which we might drop in one more drop of verjuice, to eat into his bones." Very candid always, and sometimes very interesting, were *Talk about the Edinburgh Review.*

[1] Contained in letters to his wife.

Talk about the Edinburgh Review.

the disclosures about the infant *Edinburgh Review.* In the midst of his jocose talk, Sydney Smith occasionally became suddenly serious, when some ancient topic was brought up, or some life-enduring sensibility touched; and his voice, eye, and manner at such times disposed one to tears almost as much as his ordinary discourse did to laughter. Among the subjects which were thus sacred to him was that of the Anti-slavery cause.—HARRIET MARTINEAU ("Autobiography").

Opinion of British aristocracy.

April 2, 1838.—Breakfasted with Sydney Smith, where we had only Hallam and Tytler, the Scotch historian; just a *partie carrée*, of the first sort. The conversation, at one time during the breakfast, was extraordinary. It fell on the influence of the aristocracy in England, on the social relations, and especially on the characters of men of letters. To my considerable surprise, both Hallam and Smith, who have been to a singular degree petted and sought by the aristocracy, pronounced its influence noxious. They even spoke with great force and almost bitterness on the point. Smith declared that he had found the influence of the aristocracy, in his own case, "oppressive," but added, "However, I never failed, I think, to speak my mind before any of them; I hardened myself early." Hallam agreed with him, and both talked with a concentrated force that showed how deeply they felt about it. In some respects the conversation was one of the most remarkable I have ever heard; and, as a testimony against aristocracy, on the point where aristocracy might be expected to work the most favorably, sur-

prised me very much.[1]—GEORGE TICKNOR ("Life and Letters of G. Ticknor").

Various traits—Compared with Rogers.

Sydney Smith leaves London on the 20th, the day before Parliament meets for business. I advised him to stay, and see something of his friends who would be crowding to London. "My flock!" said this good shepherd. "My dear sir, remember my flock!

"'The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed.'"

I could say nothing to such an argument, but I could not help thinking that, if Mr. Daniel Wilson had said such a thing, it would infallibly have appeared in his funeral sermon, and in his "Life" by Baptist Noel. But in poor Sydney's mouth it sounded like a joke. He begged me to come and see him at Combe Florey. "There I am, sir, the priest of the Flowery Valley, in a delightful parsonage, about which I care a good deal, and a delightful country, about which I do not care a straw." I told him that my meeting him was some compensation for missing Ramohun Roy. Sydney broke forth. "Compensation! Do you mean to insult me? A beneficed clergyman, an orthodox clergyman, a nobleman's chaplain, to be no more than compensation for a

[1] Sydney Smith's opinion of British aristocracy had been formed long before the date of this interview with George Ticknor. In 1800, being then twenty-nine years old, he dedicated a volume of sermons to Lord Webb Spencer, in the following words: "My Lord,—I dedicate these few sermons to you, as a slight token of my regard and respect, because I know no man who, in spite of the disadvantages of high birth, lives to more honourable and commendable purposes than yourself."

Various traits—Compared with Rogers.

Brahmin ; and a heretic Brahmin too, a fellow who has lost his own religion and can't find another ; a vile heterodox dog, who, as I am credibly informed, eats beefsteaks in private ! A man who has lost his caste ; who ought to have melted lead poured down his nostrils, if the good old Vedas were in force as they ought to be." These are some Boswelliana of Sydney, not very clerical, you will say, but indescribably amusing to the hearers, whatever the readers may think of them. Nothing can present a more striking contrast to his rapid, loud, laughing utterance, and his rector-like amplitude and rubicundity, than the low, slow, emphatic tone, and the corpse-like face of Rogers. There is as great a difference in what they say as in the voice and look with which they say it. The conversation of Rogers is remarkably polished and artificial. What he says seems to have been long meditated, and might be published with little correction. Sydney talks from the impulse of the moment, and his fun is quite inexhaustible.—LORD MACAULAY (from a letter to Hannah and Margaret Macaulay).

Preference for the law.

On leaving College it became necessary that my father should select a profession. His own inclinations would have led him to the Bar, in which profession he felt that his talents promised him success and distinction, and where a career was open to him that might gratify his ambition. But his father . . . urged so strongly his going into the Church that my father, after considering the subject deeply, felt it his duty to yield to my grandfather's wishes,

and sacrifice his own, by entering the Church, and became a curate in a small village in the midst of Salisbury Plain.—LADY HOLLAND ("Memoirs of Sydney Smith").

December 1, 1834.—Went to St. Paul's yesterday evening, to hear Sydney Smith preach. He is very good; manner impressive, voice sonorous and agreeable, *rather* familiar, but not offensively so, language simple and unadorned, sermon clear and illustrative.—CHARLES C. F. GREVILLE ("Memoirs"). *Preaching.*

I must confess that I went to hear Mr. Smith preach, with some misgiving as to the effect which that well-known face and voice, ever associated with wit and mirth, might have upon me, even in the sacred place. Never were misgivings more quickly and entirely dissipated. The moment he appeared in the pulpit, all the weight of his duty, all the authority of his office, were written on his countenance; and without a particle of affectation (of which he was incapable), his whole demeanor bespoke the gravity of his purpose.—SARAH AUSTIN (quoted in Lady Holland's "Memoirs of Sydney Smith"). *In the pulpit.*

While in the pulpit one forgot a certain ungainly awkwardness of manner, not alone because of the homage paid to acknowledged genius but because of the sound, practical, and yet solemn view he took of the cause of which he was the advocate, and perhaps his exhortation and denunciations received augmented weight from the conviction that you heard a man of profound learning defending and

propagating the truths of the Gospel, in which he himself had full and entire faith.—S. C. HALL ("Book of Memories").

Earnestness and dignity.

I have been told it is the opinion of one who knew my father well, . . . that I have hardly done justice to the more serious part of his character. If this be so, I have indeed done him grievous wrong; for this was the foundation, or rather storehouse, from which all his wit and imagination sprang, and which gave them such value in the eyes of the world. The expression of my father's face when at rest was that of sense and dignity; this was the picture of his mind in the calmer and graver hours of life.—LADY HOLLAND ("Memoirs of Sydney Smith").

May 27, 1826.—Left Rogers's with Smith, to go and assist him in choosing a grand pianoforte: found him (as I have often done before) change at once from the gay, uproarious way, into as solemn, grave, and austere a person as any bench of judges or bishops could supply: this I rather think his natural character. Called with him at Newton's to see my picture: he said, in his gravest manner, to Newton, "Couldn't you contrive to throw into his face somewhat of a stronger expression of hostility to the Church establishment?"—THOMAS MOORE ("Diary").

My father at this period[1] was in the habit of riding a good deal, but, either from the badness of his

[1] During the first years of his residence in Yorkshire.

horses, or the badness of his riding, or perhaps from both (in spite of his various ingenious contrivances to keep himself in the saddle), he had several falls, and kept us in continual anxiety. He writes, in a letter, "I used to think a fall from a horse dangerous, but much experience has convinced me to the contrary. I have had six falls in two years, and just behaved like the three per cents when they fall—I got up again, and am not a bit the worse for it, any more than the stock in question." In speaking of this, he says, "I left off riding, for the good of my parish and the peace of my family; for, somehow or other, my horse and I had a habit of parting company. On one occasion I found myself suddenly prostrate in the streets of York, much to the delight of the Dissenters. Another time, my horse Calamity flung me over his head into a neighboring parish, as if I had been a shuttlecock, and I felt grateful that it was not into a neighboring planet."—LADY HOLLAND ("Memoirs of Sydney Smith").

Horsemanship.

The horse Calamity . . . was the first-born of several young horses bred on the farm, who turned out very fine creatures; . . . but this first production was certainly not encouraging. To his dismay, a huge, lank, large-boned foal appeared, of chestnut color, and with four white legs. It grew apace, but its bones became more and more conspicuous; its appetite was unbounded—grass, hay, corn, beans, food moist and dry, were all supplied in vain, and vanished down his throat with incredible rapidity. He stood, a large living skeleton, with famine written in his face, and my father christened him

Calamity's "Tantalus."

Calamity's "Tantalus."

Calamity. As Calamity grew to maturity, he was found to be as sluggish in disposition as his master was impetuous; so my father was driven to invent his patent Tantalus, which consisted of a small sieve of corn, suspended on a semicircular bar of iron, from the ends of the shafts, just beyond the horse's nose. The corn, rattling as the vehicle proceeded, stimulated Calamity to unwonted exertions; and under the hope of overtaking this imaginary feed, he did more work than all the previous provender which had been poured down his throat had been able to obtain from him.—LADY HOLLAND ("Memoirs of Sydney Smith").

Economy.

Economy, in the estimation of common minds, often means the absence of all taste and comfort; my father had the rare art to combine it with both. For instance, he found it added much to the expense of building to have high walls; he therefore threw the whole space of the roof into his bedrooms, covered the ceilings and papered them, and thus they were all airy, gay, cheap, and pretty. Cornices he found expensive; so not one in the house, but the paper border thrown on the ceiling with a line of shade under it. This relieved the eye, and atoned for their absence. Marble chimney-pieces were too dear; so he hunted out a cheap, warm-looking Portland stone, had them cut after his own model, and the result was to produce some of the most cheerful, comfortable-looking fireplaces I remember, for as many shillings as the marble ones would have cost him pounds.—LADY HOLLAND ("Memoirs of Sydney Smith").

He never indulged in any pleasures in which his family did not share. Passionately fond of books, he hardly added one volume through all his years of poverty, to the precious little store he brought down with him from London; though without a Cyclopædia, or many of those books of reference, of which he so often felt the want in his literary pursuits.—LADY HOLLAND ("Memoirs of Sydney Smith"). *Self-denial.*

Having the means of spending now,[1] he spent as liberally as if he had been used to wealth all his life; for his rigid economy in poverty had never the effect of making him penurious.—LADY HOLLAND ("Memoirs of Sydney Smith").

Lady Holland's admirable memoir, by which we are enabled to form so satisfactory an idea of Sydney Smith, gives many instances of his generosity, self-sacrifice, and courage. His giving was munificent at all times, and it must be remembered that through the greater part of his life he was a poor man. We find him abandoning hopes of preferment, and fighting with all his might on the Whig side, when the Tories were in power. He exposes himself to malignant disease in the discharge of duty. Moreover it appears that this brilliant wit was a most practical man, full of shrewd common sense, and well-fitted to cope with the details of business. *Breadth of character.*

He used to dig vigorously an hour or two each day in his garden, as he said, "to avoid sudden

[1] The death of his brother Courtenay, in 1839, put him in possession of a handsome fortune.

death," for he was even then inclined to *embonpoint.* . . . He spent much time in reading and composition ; his activity was unceasing ; I hardly remember seeing him unoccupied, but when engaged in conversation. . . . He never sat a moment after dinner when alone with his family ; . . . the cloth was scarcely removed ere he called for his hat and stick, and sallied forth for his evening stroll, in which we always accompanied him. Each cow, and calf, and horse, and pig, was in turn visited, and fed, and patted, and all seemed to welcome him ; he cared for their comforts as he cared for the comforts of every living thing around him. He used to say, "I am for cheap luxuries, even for animals ; now all animals have a passion for scratching their backbones ; they break down your gates and palings to effect this. Look ! There is my universal scratcher, a sharp-edged pole, resting on a high and low post, adapted to every height, from a horse to a lamb. Even the Edinburgh Reviewer can take his turn ; you have no idea how popular it is ; I have not had a gate broken since I put it up ; I have it in all my fields."

In Yorkshire, 1809.

He always had some experiment going on. At one time he was bent on inventing a method of burning the fat of his own sheep, instead of candles ; and numerous were the little tin lamps, of various forms and sizes, produced ; great the illuminations and greater the smells, the house being redolent of mutton-fat while this fancy lasted. . . .

My father employed himself much in acquiring a knowledge of all rural arts and details of farming, such as baking, brewing, fattening poultry, churn-

ing, etc.; talking much to the working people, whose shrewdness and blunt sense delighted him. He always acquired some information from them. . . . He began too on a small scale to exercise his skill in medicine, doing much good among his poor neighbors.—LADY HOLLAND ("Memoirs of Sydney Smith").

In Yorkshire, 1809.

At ten we always went downstairs for prayers, in the library. Immediately after, if we were alone, appeared the "farmer" at the door, lantern in hand. "David, bring me my coat and stick;" and off he set with him, summer and winter, to visit his horses, and see that they were all well fed and comfortable in their regions for the night. He kept up this custom all his life. On returning to the drawing-room, he usually asked for a little music. "If I were to begin life again, I would devote much time to music. All musical people seem to me happy; it is the most engrossing pursuit; almost the only innocent and unpunished passion."—LADY HOLLAND ("Memoirs of Sydney Smith").

Evening employments.

He always lamented that the power of travelling had been denied him till his body had become almost unequal to the fatigue of doing so. He was ever most ready to see and hear; but with the same rapidity that characterized his thoughts, he only liked first impressions, and never dwelt ten minutes together on the same scene or picture; declared he had mastered the Louvre in a quarter of an hour, and could judge of Talma's powers in ten minutes. —LADY HOLLAND ("Memoirs of Sydney Smith").

Love of change.

Conciliating a dandy.

It is said that nobody could stand with Burke under a doorway in a shower of rain without finding him out to be an extraordinary man: so, of my father, I have heard it often said that it was impossible to converse with him for five minutes, and not feel he was not like other men. I have seen him melt an exquisite of the first water, in a most amusing manner. Being very punctual (too punctual indeed—it was the only virtue he made disagreeable), he not unfrequently arrived to dinner before the lady of the house was dressed, and received her company for her. A dandy would appear, all glorious without, whose neckcloth, shirt, and white gloves were unimpeachable, and the evident result of profound study; and who, not having been introduced, of course, in true English style, appeared unconscious that another mortal was in the same room with him. My father, whose neckcloth always looked like a pudding tied round his throat, and the arrangement of whose garments seemed more the result of accident than design (yet, I ought to add, . . . always looked like a gentleman, in its best sense—that is, as one who deserved respect), eyed him calmly for a minute, as if to take his measure, then addressed him. The dandy started, and bowed stiffly over his neckcloth. The second observation made him evidently say to himself, "Can that observation come out of that neckcloth?" The third convinced him there was something better, or at least equal to neckcloths in the world; and by the time the lady of the house arrived they had sworn eternal friendship.—LADY HOLLAND ("Memoirs of Sydney Smith").

"The oddest instance of absence of mind happened to me once in forgetting my own name. I knocked at a door in London: asked, Is Mrs. B—— at home? 'Yes, Sir; pray what name shall I say?' I looked in the man's face astonished—what name? what name? ay, that is the question; what is my name? I believe the man thought me mad; but it is literally true, that during the space of two or three minutes I had no more idea who I was than if I had never existed. I did not know whether I was a Dissenter or a layman. I felt as dull as Sternhold and Hopkins. At last, to my great relief, it flashed across me that I was Sydney Smith."—LADY HOLLAND ("Memoirs of Sydney Smith"). *Absent-mindedness.*

A new actor has appeared, a Mr. Farren. . . . I have not heard him, for I never go to plays, and should not care (except for the amusement of others) if there was no theatre in the whole world; it is an art intended only for amusement, and it never amuses me. . . . I have not the heart, when an amiable lady says, "Come to 'Semiramis' in my box," to decline; but I get bolder at a distance. "Semiramis" would be to me pure misery. I love music very little—I hate acting. . . . Moreover, it would be rather out of etiquette for a Canon of St. Paul's to go to an opera; and where etiquette prevents me from doing things disagreeable to myself, I am a perfect martinet.—SYDNEY SMITH (from two letters). *The theatre and the opera.*

My father was by nature quick and hasty, yet he always struggled against it; made many regulations

to avoid exciting such feelings; and when he did give way, it often excited my admiration to see him gradually subduing his chafed spirit, and to observe his dissatisfaction with himself till he had humbled himself and made peace, it mattered not with whom, groom or child. He could not bear the reproaches of his own heart.—LADY HOLLAND ("Memoirs of Sydney Smith").

Hasty, but placable.

He was a giant when roused, and the goad which roused him was injustice. He was clear from envy, hatred, and all uncharitableness, and incapable of any littleness. He was ever ready to defend the weak. He showed as much zeal in saving a poor village boy, as in aiding a Minister of State. His hatred of every form of cant and affectation was only equalled by his prompt and unerring detection of it. . . . There never was a man in whom they were calculated to excite more disgust than the brave, frank, and high-spirited gentleman whose letters are before us. For in him a passion for truth was enlightened by the utmost perspicacity of mind, and the most acute sense of the ludicrous and unseemly.—SARAH AUSTIN (Preface to "Sydney Smith's Letters").

Magnanimous—Cant-hating.

I have really taken a great liking to him. He is full of wit, humor and shrewd observation. He is not one of those show-talkers who reserve all their good things for special occasions. It seems to be his greatest luxury to keep his wife and daughters laughing for two or three hours every day. His notions of law, government, and trade

Macaulay's estimate.

are surprisingly clear and just. His misfortune is to have chosen a profession at once above him and below him. Zeal would have made him a prodigy; formality and bigotry would have made him a bishop; but he could neither rise to the duties of his order, nor stoop to its degradations.—LORD MACAULAY (Extract from a letter). *Macaulay's estimate.*

He was very fond of children—liked to have them with him. . . . He took a lively interest in all our pursuits and happiness; . . . he never lost an opportunity of showing us whatever could instruct or amuse, that came within his reach. . . . He loved to discuss with us, met us as his equals, and I look back with wonder at his patient refutation of our crude and foolish opinions. As we grew up we became his companions; we were called in to all family counsels. . . . On an evening, often with a child on each knee, he would invent a tale for their amusement, composed of such ludicrous images and combinations as nobody else would have thought of, succeeding each other with the greatest rapidity; these were devoured by them with eyes and ears, in breathless interest; but at the most thrilling moment always terminated with "and so they lived very happy ever after," a kiss on each fat cheek, "and now to bed."—LADY HOLLAND ("Memoirs of Sydney Smith"). *Treatment of his children.*

One of his little children, then in delicate health, had for some time been in the habit of waking suddenly every evening; sobbing, anticipating the death of parents, and all the sorrows of life, almost *Wise tenderness.*

Wise tenderness.

before life had begun. He could not bear this unnatural union of childhood and sorrow, and for a long period, I have heard my mother say, each evening found him, at the waking of his child, with a toy, a picture-book, a bunch of grapes, or a joyous tale, mixed with a little strengthening advice and the tenderest caresses, till the habit was broken, and the child woke to joy and not to sorrow.—LADY HOLLAND ("Memoirs of Sydney Smith").

Not afraid to be happy.

It must . . . be constantly borne in mind that Mr. Sydney Smith did not regard Christianity as an ascetic religion. . . . We say this, not in justification of the view, which it would be wholly out of place to discuss here, but of the consistency of him who held it. It was in perfect conformity with this belief that he encouraged every social pleasure and every taste for innocent enjoyment. These things he regarded not as lamentable concessions to the demands of a sinful nature, but as praiseworthy endeavors to mitigate the evils and sufferings of humanity, and hence in perfect harmony with the character and designs of a benevolent Creator.—SARAH AUSTIN (Preface to "Sydney Smith's Letters").

Animal spirits.

At this period of his life[1] . . . his spirits were often such that they were more like the joyousness and playfulness of a clever schoolboy than the sobriety and gravity of the father of a family;

[1] When about thirty years old.

and his gayety was so irresistible and so infectious, that it carried everything before it. Nothing could withstand the contagion of that ringing, joy-inspiring laugh, which seemed to spring from the fresh, genuine enjoyment he felt at the multitude of unexpected images which sprang up in his mind, and succeeded each other with a rapidity that hardly allowed his hearers to follow him, but left them panting and exhausted with laughter, to cry out for mercy. An amusing instance of this occurred once when he met that Queen of Tragedy, Mrs. Siddons, for the first time. She seemed determined to resist him, and preserve her tragic dignity; but after a vain struggle yielded to the general infection, and flung herself back in her chair, in such a fearful paroxysm of laughter, and of such long continuance, that it made quite a scene, and all the company were alarmed.—LADY HOLLAND ("Memoirs of Sydney Smith").

Animal spirits.

Talking of tastes, my father quite shared in his friend Mrs. Opie's, for light, heat, and fragrance. The first was almost a passion with him, which he indulged by means of little tin lamps with mutton-fat in the days of his poverty—these, when a little richer, to our great joy, were exchanged for oil-lamps—and lastly, in the days of his wealth, for a profusion of wax-lights. . . . His delight in flowers was extreme. He often went into the garden the moment he was dressed, and returned with his hands full of roses, to place them on the plates at breakfast.—LADY HOLLAND ("Memoirs of Sydney Smith").

Light, heat, and fragrance.

Whimsicalities.

In default of an episcopal palace, Sydney Smith removed, in 1828, to Combe Florey, near Taunton, which he soon converted into one of the most comfortable and delightful of parsonages. . . . On one occasion, when some London visitors were expected, he called in art to aid nature, and caused oranges to be tied to the shrubs in the drive and garden. The stratagem succeeded admirably, and great was his exultation when an unlucky urchin from the village was detected in the act of sucking one through a quill. . . . Another time, on a lady's happening to hint that the pretty paddock would be improved by deer, he fitted his two donkeys with antlers, and placed them with this extraordinary head-gear on a rising ground immediately in front of the windows. The effect, enhanced by the puzzled looks of the animals, was ludicrous in the extreme.[1] — ABRAHAM HAYWARD ("Essays").[2]

Breakfast at Combe Florey.

I long to give some account of these breakfasts, and the mode of life at Combe Florey, . . . but it would be difficult to convey an adequate idea of the beauty, gayety, and happiness of the scene in which they took place, or the charm that he infused into the society assembled round his breakfast-table.

[1] In his Sketch of the Life and Times of the Rev. Sydney Smith, Mr. Reid says: "There still survives at Combe Florey a worthy old man, who recounts with a smile the glee with which he was accustomed in the days of his youth to obey his master's orders to decorate the donkeys."

[2] Hayward (Abraham). Biographical and Critical Essays. 2 vols., 8vo. London, 1858.

The room, an oblong, was . . . surrounded on three sides by books, . . . not brown, dark-looking volumes, but all in the brightest bindings; for he carried his system of furnishing for gayety even to the dress of his books.

Breakfast at Combe Florey.

He would come down into this long, low room in the morning, like a "giant refreshed to run his course," bright and happy as the scene around him. "Thank God for Combe Florey!" he would exclaim, throwing himself into his red arm-chair, and looking round; "I feel like a bridegroom in the honeymoon." . . . "Ring the bell, Saba;" the usual refrain, by-the-bye, in every pause, for he contrived to keep every body actively employed around him, and nobody ever objected to be so employed. "Ring the bell, Saba." Enter the servant, D——. "D——, glorify the room." This meant that the three Venetian windows of the bay were to be flung open, displaying the garden on every side, and letting in a blaze of sunshine and flowers. D—— glorifies the room with the utmost gravity, and departs. "You would not believe it," he said, "to look at him now, but D—— is a reformed Quaker. Yes, he quaked, or did quake; his brother quakes still; but D—— is now thoroughly orthodox. I should not like to be a Dissenter in his way; he is to be one of my vergers at St. Paul's some day. Lady B—— calls them my virgins. She asked me the other day, 'Pray, Mr. Smith, is it true that you walk down St. Paul's with three virgins holding silver pokers before you?' I shook my head, and looked very grave, and bid her come and see. Some enemy of the Church, some Dissenter, had clearly

been misleading her."—LADY HOLLAND ("Memoirs of Sydney Smith").

The friend of children.

The people of Foston still relate that young children felt no fear of him, but were accustomed to run after him on the road, "pulling at his coat-tails," and roguishly clamouring for the sweets which they knew he always carried in their interests. . . . The memory of Sydney Smith is still cherished with reverent affection by the children, and nephews and nieces of the old servants at Foston.—STUART J. REID ("Life and Times of Sydney Smith").

Practical benevolence.

His improved position at Combe Florey enabled him to do more for those who were in want than had ever been in his power whilst at Foston. . . . A room in the rectory was fitted up as a dispensary, and simple remedies for common ailments were there prescribed and distributed. He was doctor to all the village, and at the call of every one whom he had power to help. . . . There are only two or three persons now living in Combe Florey who were intimately acquainted with Sydney Smith, but they confirm all that has been ever said or written concerning the goodness of his heart, and his practical interest in the welfare of his parishioners. One man recalls the rector's attention to his father during a long and dangerous illness, and states that he was accustomed to see him almost every day, when he would pray with him, and read to him, and by gay and cheery conversation divert his thoughts. —STUART J. REID ("Life and Times of Sydney Smith").

Relations to his parishioners.

The distress among the poor throughout the country at the close of the Peninsular war was aggravated by the failure of the harvest of 1816, and the people of Foston shared the common privation which ensued. Bad and insufficient food reduced many to the verge of the grave, and fever of a malignant type prevailed that winter in the village, and carried off some of the inhabitants,—and, "Sydney visited them all constantly, every day," was the testimony of his wife in a forgotten letter to a friend, which has just come to light. . . . Adjoining the rectory grounds there are a number of small gardens, filled with well-grown fruit trees, and these gardens were planned, stocked, and given to the villagers at a merely nominal rent by Sydney Smith. The people still speak gratefully of "Sydney's Orchards," as they are termed.—STUART J. REID ("Life and Times of Sydney Smith").

DOUGLAS WILLIAM JERROLD.

1803–1857.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

IN order rightly to understand Jerrold, it is necessary to pay some attention to the circumstances of his early life. He was the son of an actor, who was also the manager of a small provincial theatre. The sons of actors are prone to follow their father's calling, and so might Jerrold have done, had not his parents yielded to the boy's passionate desire to go to sea, and permitted him to enter the royal service as a midshipman. His future course now seemed fairly settled. The life of a sailor, with all its hardships, was one which he loved, and in which he was well fitted to succeed. After two years, however, the establishment of peace in 1815 brought his naval career to a sudden end; and the little midshipman, not yet quite thirteen years old, returned home to find his father a bankrupt. The family removed to London, and Douglas was apprenticed to a printer. Now began the hard and prolonged struggle of his life. When his daily work in the printing-house was over, he applied himself to the more important business of gaining an education. At this time his mind was stimulated and developed, and the bent of his genius was determined, chiefly by two potent influences—he devoted his leisure mo-

ments to studying the plays of Shakespeare and the acting of Kean. He soon began to write for the stage, and to turn his hand to literary hack-work of all kinds. Miserably underpaid, he drudged during several years for the surly and rapacious manager of a minor theatre. Later, he himself became a manager, and, for a short time, acted upon his own stage.

This was the apprenticeship which he was forced to serve—midshipman, printer, hack-writer, theatrical manager, and actor—all this, before he could take his true place as a powerful satirist, an active political reformer, a successful playwright and editor; before he could make one of that little company of wits who gave to *Punch* the brilliant reputation in virtue of which that paper manages to exist even now, after having outlived its honors.

His indebtedness to fortune, or to any external help, was slight indeed. The success he gained was due to his own powers. He was never a healthy man; but rheumatism, sciatica, heart disease, all failed to quench his fiery, aggressive energy and buoyant vivacity.

He has been called hard and bitter; and his judgments of men were indeed severe, his expressions often unduly harsh. Still, his experience of life had not been of a nature to tinge with rose-color his view of humanity, or to cultivate those flowery phrases in which polite society delights. We do not quarrel with rugged Samuel Johnson because he lacked the courtly refinement of Chesterfield; and this may be said of Jerrold—that he was thoroughly honest and fearless; true to his convictions; loyal to whatever

cause he espoused. He was highly pugnacious, but there is nothing to show that he took unfair advantages, or dealt foul blows.

With him wit was less a plaything than a weapon; and if its keen edge sometimes cut deep, we must remember why it was always kept sharp: his youth had been one long battle for life, against heavy odds. When we pronounce sentence upon great wits for their apparent cruelty, there is one apology which is seldom allowed the weight it really deserves, namely, the urgent desire for exercise, the clamor for expression and manifestation, which accompanies the possession of any strong faculty. As the logician enjoys the progressive steps which lead to a clear demonstration—enjoys them quite irrespective of the satisfaction of confuting an opponent, so the wit glories in the brilliancy of a sharp rejoinder; and his delight in the triumphant exercise of his gift renders him unconscious of the pain he may inflict. He did not seek a victim; he merely improved an opportunity. This plea may fairly be urged in Jerrold's behalf. There is no evidence on which to convict him of malignity, and those who best knew him are unanimous in attesting the kindness, and even tenderness, of his heart.

His tastes were simple. He loved out-of-door life; early morning walks; rambles in country lanes; most of all, the sea. Many engaging traits endeared him to his friends—a spirit of hearty good-fellowship; a generosity which often outran discretion; and a frank simplicity and guilelessness of nature, perhaps most fitly described as unworldliness. These qualities belong in an especial degree to act-

ors, making them the most charming of all companions; and it was but natural that they should appear in the son of an actor, one whose own life was so long and intimately associated with the theatre.

The principal authority is the biography of Jerrold, written by his son, Blanchard Jerrold. The following works also deserve attention: Charles Mackay's "Forty Years' Recollections;" Wilkie Collins's "My Miscellanies;" Hawthorne's "English Notebooks;" George Hodder's "Memories of My Time;" Charles and Mary Cowden Clarke's "Recollections of Writers;" and an article by Hepworth Dixon in the *Athenæum* of December 25, 1858.

LEADING EVENTS OF JERROLD'S LIFE.

1803. Born, January 3d, at Sheerness, Kent.
1813.—(Aged 10.) A midshipman on the guard-ship, Namur, December 22d.
1815.—(Aged 12.) Leaves the service, October 21st.
1816.—(Aged 13.) Apprenticed to a printer in London.
1818.—(Aged 15.) Writes "The Duelists," a farce.[1]
1821.—(Aged 18.) "The Duelists" performed at Sadler's Wells Theatre, under the title of "More Frightened than Hurt."
1824.—(Aged 21.) Marries Miss Susan Swann.
1829.—(Aged 26.) "Black-eyed Susan" performed at the Surrey Theatre.
1831.—(Aged 28.) "The Bride of Ludgate" performed at Drury Lane Theatre.
1832.—(Aged 29.) "The Rent-day" performed at Drury Lane Theatre.

[1] From 1819 to 1824 (from his sixteenth to his twenty-first year) Jerrold was employed as a printer and a hack-writer; producing plays, poems, criticisms, etc.

1835.—(Aged 32.) Four plays written and performed in the course of the year.

1836.—(Aged 33.) Manages the Strand Theatre, and appears upon his own stage. Composes several plays.

1841.—(Aged 38.) Contributes to the second number of *Punch*.

1842.—(Aged 39.) "Bubbles of the Day" performed at Covent Garden Theatre. "The Prisoner of War" performed at Drury Lane Theatre.

1843.—(Aged 40.) Publishes "The Story of a Feather," in *Punch*. Edits the *Illuminated Magazine*.

1845.—(Aged 42.) Edits the *Shilling Magazine*. Publishes "The Caudle Lectures" in *Punch*. "Time Works Wonders" produced at the Haymarket Theatre.

1846.—(Aged 43.) Edits *Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper*. Publishes "The Chronicles of Clovernook."

1852.—(Aged 49.) Edits *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper*.

1854.—(Aged 51.) "A Heart of Gold" performed at the Princess's Theatre.

1857.—(Aged 54 years and 5 months.) Dies, June 8th.

DOUGLAS WILLIAM JERROLD.

HIS face, as a child, must have been remarkable, since its features live still, and vividly, in the minds of old people who knew him simply as a young fellow-townsman. The testimony of Mr. and Mrs. Patrick, and of old talkative Jogrum Brown, points to a very handsome, white-haired, rosy-cheeked boy. A boy with eager, flashing eyes he must have been. Energy, fire in every muscle of the strongly-marked countenance; the thin lips curled down with a wicked humor; the eyes, sharp as lightning, were fixed upon you, and looked through you;—this in after life. But the boy, prisoned in High Street, Sheerness, who dwelt mournfully upon the "Death of Abel," and could enjoy "Roderick Random," . . . this restless, eager boy to whom the paternal stage[1] was an arena all too mean for his aspiring soul, must have borne, even upon his white head, ten summers old, vivid signs of the great and dauntless heart that was within him. Boys, and the games of boys, were not for him. "The only athletic sport I ever mastered," he said long years afterwards,

Boyhood.

[1] His father was an actor, and the manager of a small theatrical company.

"was backgammon."—BLANCHARD JERROLD ("Life of Jerrold").[1]

A youth in London.

I have heard him describe his work at this period of his life with honest pride.[2] He would tell me how he had risen with the first peep of day to study his Latin grammar alone, before going to work; how he had fallen upon Shakespeare, and had devoured every line of the great master; and how, with his old father, who was a thoughtful if a weak man, he had sat in the intervals of his labor, to read a novel of Sir Walter Scott, obtained, by pinching, from a library. He used to relate a story with great delight of a certain day on which he was useful in several capacities to his father. The two were alone in London, Mrs. Jerrold and her daughter being in the country, possibly fulfilling some provincial engagement. The young apprentice brought home, joyfully enough, his first earnings. Very dreary was his home, with his poor weak father sitting in the chimney corner; but there was a fire in the boy that would light up that home; at any rate they would be cheerful for one day. The apprentice, with the first solid fruits of industry in his pocket, sallied forth to buy the dinner. The ingredients of a beefsteak pie were quickly got together, and the purchaser returned to be rewarded with the proud look of his father. To earn the pie was one thing, but who could make it? Young Douglas would try his

[1] Jerrold (William Blanchard). Life and Remains of Douglas Jerrold. 8vo. London, 1859.

[2] In 1816: Jerrold, then in his fourteenth year, had been apprenticed to a printer.

hand at a crust! Merrily the manufacture went forward; the pie was made. Then the little busy fellow saw that he must carry it to the bake-house. Willingly he went forth; for, with the balance of his money, it had been agreed that he should hire the last of Sir Walter's volumes, and return to read it to his father while the dinner was in the oven. The memory of this day always remained vivid to him. There was an odd kind of humor about it that tickled him. It so thoroughly illustrated his notions on independence, that he could not forbear from dwelling again and again on it among his friends. "Yes, sir," he would say, emphatically, "I earned the pie, I made the pie, I took it to the bake-house, I fetched it home; and my father said, 'Really the boy made the crust remarkably well.'"—BLANCHARD JERROLD ("Life of Jerrold"). *A youth in London.*

He was a very short man, but with breadth enough, and a back excessively bent,—bowed almost to deformity; very grey hair, and a face and expression of remarkable briskness and intelligence. His profile came out pretty boldly, and his eyes had the prominence that indicates, I believe, volubility of speech, nor did he fail to talk from the instant of his appearance; and in the tone of his voice, and in his glance, and in the whole man, there was something racy,—a flavor of the humorist. His step was that of an aged man, and he put his stick down very decidedly at every footfall; though as he afterwards told me that he was only fifty-two, he need not yet have been infirm.—NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE ("English Note-books"). *Personal appearance.*

Personal appearance.

Never did I see a handsomer head on an uglier body. Douglas Jerrold is small, with stooping shoulders, but the head placed upon those shoulders is truly magnificent. He has the head of a Jupiter on the body of a Thersites. A high, broad, cheerful, arched forehead; a very fine mouth; a well-shaped nose; clear, heaven-blue eyes; make the face of Jerrold one of the handsomest.—LUDWIG KALISCH (quoted in the "Life of Jerrold").

I see a merry party of English people mounted on small donkeys, with huge saddles, galloping toward me down a white road in the broad sunlight. This is in France, not far from Boulogne sur Mer, on the road to La Cappelle. I am a boy of about twelve years of age, and am accompanied by a venerable servant and retainer of the family, a grumpy, cross-grained loyal servitor, known to us only as Old John. As the cavalcade clatters by, I notice the leader of the troop, a blue-eyed, mild-faced, effeminate-looking gentleman, who with his straw hat, trousers rucked half way up his legs, his flying long, light buff hair and flapping coat, cuts a droll and original figure enough.

"Do you know who him is, Master Frank?" queried Old John.

"I do not."

"That's Douglas Jerrold, him as writes things for the papers. Some folks say he has a heap of knowledge and mind, but I don't think much of him."

This was my first acquaintance with the great satirist. I was too young to understand anything

about his position, save that he was the father of my schoolmate, William Blanchard Jerrold. I often met Douglas Jerrold years after at a certain club in Covent Garden, where Thackeray, the Mayhews, the Broughs, William Jerrold, Sydney Blanchard and many others used to resort. Here he used to sit doubled up, smoking a long pipe, a little old man with a young face, or with a face, at least, which puzzled you whether it was young, or old, manly, or womanly; there was something at once leonine and feminine in his appearance.—FRANK BELLEW (*New York Tribune*, January 14, 1883).

Personal appearance.

"His place among the wits of our time is clear enough," wrote Mr. Hepworth Dixon, who also knew him in the intimacy of the Museum and other clubs. "He had less frolic than Theodore Hook, less elaborate humor than Sydney Smith, less quibble and quaintness than Thomas Hood; but he surpassed all these in intellectual flash and strength. His wit was all steel points, and his talk was like squadrons of lancers in evolution. Not one pun, we have heard, is to be found in his writings. His wit stood nearer to poetic fancy than to broad humor."—BLANCHARD JERROLD ("Life of Jerrold").

Position among contemporary wits.

A dinner is discussed. Douglas Jerrold listens quietly, possibly tired of dinners and declining pressing invitations to be present. In a few minutes he will chime in, "If an earthquake were to engulf England to-morrow, the English would manage to meet and dine somewhere among the rubbish, just to celebrate the event."

Examples of his wit.

Examples of his wit.

Some member of the club, hearing an air mentioned, exclaimed, "That always carries me away when I hear it." "Can nobody whistle it?" asked Douglas Jerrold.

Douglas Jerrold is seriously disappointed with a certain book written by one of his friends, and has expressed his disappointment.

Friend.—"I hear you said —— was the worst book I ever wrote."

Jerrold.—"No, I didn't. I said it was the worst book anybody ever wrote."—BLANCHARD JERROLD ("Life of Jerrold").

Jerrold would perceive the germ of a retort before you had well begun to form your sentence, and would bring it forth in full blossom the instant you had done speaking. He had a way of looking straight in the face of one to whom he dealt a repartee, and with an expression of eye that seemed to ask appreciation of the point of the thing he was going to say, thus depriving it of personality or ill-nature. It was as if he called upon its object to enjoy it with him, rather than to resent its sharpness. There was a peculiar compression with a sudden curve or lift of the lip that showed his own sense of the fun of the thing he was uttering, while his glance met his interlocutor's with a firm, unflinching roguery and an unfaltering drollery of tone that had none of the sidelong, furtive look and irritating tone of usual utterers of mere rough retorts. When an acquaintance came up to him and said, "Why, Jerrold, I hear you said my nose was like the ace of clubs!" Jerrold returned, "No, I didn't; but now

I look at it, I see it is very like." The question of the actual resemblance was far less present to his mind than the neatness of his own turn upon the complainant. . . . When the publisher of Bentley's Miscellany said to Jerrold, "I had some doubts about the name I should give the magazine; I thought at one time of calling it 'The Wits' Miscellany.'" "Well," was the rejoinder, "but you needn't have gone to the other extremity." Knowing Jerrold, we feel that had the speaker been the most brilliant genius that ever lived the retort would have been the same, the patness having once entered his brain.—C. and M. C. CLARKE ("Recollections of Writers").[1]

Examples of his wit.

Absurd as the bare idea of bitterness must appear in connection with such a nature as his, to those who really knew him, the reason why strangers so often and so ridiculously misunderstood him, is not difficult to discover. That marvellous brightness and quickness of perception which has distinguished him far and wide as the sayer of some of the wittiest, and often some of the wisest things also, in the English language, expressed itself almost with the suddenness of lightning. This absence of all appearance of artifice or preparation, this flash and readiness which made the great charm of his wit, rendered him, at the same time, quite incapable of suppressing a good thing from prudential considerations. It sparkled off his tongue before he was aware of it. It was always a bright surprise to him-

Free from malignity.

[1] Clarke (Charles Cowden and Mary Cowden). Recollections of Writers. 12mo. London, 1878.

Free from malignity.

self ; and it never occurred to him that it could be anything but a bright surprise to others. All his so-called bitter things were said with a burst of hearty school-boy laughter, which showed how far he was himself from attaching a serious importance to them. Strangers apparently failed to draw this inference, plain as it was ; and often mistook him accordingly. If they had seen him in the society of children ; if they had surprised him in the house of any one of his literary brethren who was in difficulty and distress ; if they had met him by the bedside of a sick friend, how simply and how irresistibly the gentle, generous, affectionate nature of the man would then have disclosed itself to the most careless chance acquaintance who ever misunderstood him ! Very few men have won the loving regard of so many friends so rapidly, and have kept that regard so enduringly to the last day of their lives, as Douglas Jerrold.—WILKIE COLLINS ("My Miscellanies").[1]

Only to be feared by knaves and fools.

My first impression was one of surprise,—not at his remarkable appearance, of which I was aware ;—. . . but at the gentle and thoughtful kindness which set its mark on all he said and did. Somehow, all his good things were so dropped as to fall into my trumpet, without any trouble or ostentation. This was the dreaded and unpopular man who must have been hated (for he *was* hated) as *Punch* and not as Jerrold,—through fear, and not through reason or feeling. His wit always appeared to me as gen-

[1] Collins (William Wilkie). My Miscellanies. 2 vols., 8vo. London, 1863.

tle as it was honest,—as innocent as it was sound. I could say of him as of Sydney Smith, that I never heard him say, in the way of raillery, any thing of others that I should mind his saying of me. I never feared him in the least, nor saw reason why any but knaves or fools should fear him.—HARRIET MARTINEAU ("Autobiography").

Only to be feared by knaves and fools.

The term "acrid," which Hawthorne so unluckily applied to the character of his genius, was wholly unjust. There was nothing virulent or malignant in his good sayings; there were hard blows in them, no doubt, but no wounds—palpable hits, but no bloodshed. The bitterness was pleasant, and without the slightest tincture of malice; and the spontaneity of his wit was positively marvellous. . . . There were not wanting men of genius and learning who were contented to be the victims or objects of his brilliant jokes, rather than that the brilliant jokes should not be made. No listener enjoyed his good things more than he did himself. His laughter—loud and hearty—followed the joke as the crack of the explosion follows the discharge of the bullet. He usually passed his hand rapidly through the thick grey hair over his intellectual forehead—as if every hair was full charged with the electricity of a new idea—and would forthwith discharge the *bon mots* in a coruscation and shower of sparks. . . . And though Jerrold could act the cynic as well as anybody, and hit his friends with his arrowy pellets as hard as he hit his foes; his friends, though they might wince for a moment under the smart, were as ready to laugh at the ec-

Not a bitter man.

centric yet sensible drollery as any of the spectators and hearers. And his jests were quite as often good-natured as the reverse.—CHARLES MACKAY ("Recollections").[1]

The man better than the author.

Jerrold in his little study, with a cigar, a flask of Rhine wine on the table, a cedar log on the fire, and half a dozen literary youngsters round the board listening to his bright wit and his wisdom that was brighter even than his wit,—this is, we think, the image of the good friend and singular humorist that will live most brightly and permanently in the minds of those who knew him. Warmth and generosity, haste in giving and forgiving, a passionate desire to see every one cheery, prosperous, and content, went with him from cradle to tomb. . . . Men who linger wistfully on the memory of that tiny frame; on that eager, radiant face; on those infantine ways, with their wonderfully subtle and elaborate guilelessness; on that ailing constitution and fiery blood; on that joyous, tender, teasing, frolicsome, thoughtful heart; must always think of him, less as the flashing wit and scathing satirist,—than as of some marvellously gifted, noble, and wayward child, the sport of nature and the delight of man. He will be recalled to those who knew and loved him, not by any big and sounding appellation, but by some affectionate and soft diminutive;—not as brilliant Douglas or magnificent Douglas, but simply and fondly as *dear*

[1] Mackay (Charles). Forty Years' Recollections, from 1830 to 1870. 2 vols., 8vo. London, 1877.

Douglas.—Hepworth Dixon (*Athenæum*, December 25, 1858).

It was a hearty way with him to accede to any request made on his purse, his influence, or his time; but when he found he had been cheated of his sympathy, he was roused to fury. With all his penetration and experience of the world, . . . no man was more easily imposed on. When a stranger advanced into his presence, he began by believing him, and so half the stranger's point was gained at the outset. The begging-letter impostor found an easy dupe in him. He had the revenge of painting a few of his enemies, but they were dear models.—Blanchard Jerrold ("The Best of all Good Company").[1]

Easily duped.

His heart was as kindly a one as ever beat in a human bosom; and his hand most liberal, and often far more liberal than his means might have justified. He was once asked by a literary acquaintance, whether he had the courage, to lend him a guinea. "Oh, yes," he replied, "I've got the courage; but I haven't got the guinea." He had always the courage to do a kind action; and when he had the guinea, it was always at the command of the suffering and the distressed, especially if the sufferer from pecuniary woe was a brother of the quill, and an honest laborer in the field of literature.—Charles Mackay ("Forty Years' Recollections").

Kindness.

[1] Jerrold (William Blanchard). The Best of all Good Company. 8vo. London, 1873.

Charity.

Let any man in difficulties find Douglas Jerrold at home and alone, and he had all he wanted, and more, very often, than it was prudent in the giver to cast from his slender store. There was a fatality about these helps given to friends. They were nearly always repaid with ingratitude or indifference. . . . Large sums the payment of which was spread over long years, and the last of which was paid not long before the liberal writer's death, were thus sent forth, in honest hope to help fellow-men, by the man whom the world obstinately regarded as a spiteful cynic. . . . Poles, Hungarians, Frenchmen, found their way to Putney and to St. John's Wood—now asking to be relieved, now imploring introductions that should give them work. They always had a kind reception, and help as far as it could be afforded. Many strange impostors came too; and these were met, when their trick was discovered, with an outburst of passionate reproach. The confiding man can make no terms with deceit. And when I remember the number of occasions on which the subject of this book was deceived—the fast friends who sought his help, and then avoided him—I cannot but wonder as I call to mind the freshness of his generosity even a week before his death. The last time he signed his check-book was to oblige a friend; the last letter he received was one in which the repayment of a loan was deferred.—BLANCHARD JERROLD ("Life of Jerrold").

While living at Putney he ordered a brougham—plain and quiet—to be built for him. He went one morning to the coach-builder's shop to see the new

carriage. Its surface was without a speck. "Ah!" said the customer, as he turned to the back of the vehicle, "its polish is perfect now; but the urchins will soon cover it with scratches." "But, sir, I can put a few spikes here, that will keep any urchins off," the coach-maker answered. "By no means, man," was the sharp, severe reply. "And know that, to me, a thousand scratches on my carriage would be more welcome than one on the hand of a footsore lad to whom a stolen lift might be a godsend."—BLANCHARD JERROLD ("Life of Jerrold").

A kindly preference.

A natural weakness of body—that ebbed almost daily into real debility, as it flowed back daily into a sudden and surprising semblance of strength—disposed him to shun for himself, and fear for those he liked, the chances of violent fatigue and dangerous adventures, though no man could admire with warmer zest the tale of brave actions bravely told. All his faculties swayed, as it were, between poles which seemed to have no visible connection. A man to outward seeming full of whimsical oppositions! He delighted in exercise, yet he could scarcely ride or walk. Bold as a lion, he was also nervous as a bird. In a boat he was a rock, on the edge of a cliff, a leaf. Standing in the stern-sheets in a storm, he looked the image of a hero—standing on the July Column he turned pale and sick. Though twisted with pain, he was ever the liveliest rattle in the company. Heart disease, sciatica, rheumatism in the eyes, never left him safe an instant. . . . With a singular quickness for music, he

Strongly contrasted traits.

could never dance a step. Without voice, his singing was a delight which no ear that ever heard it will forget.—HEPWORTH DIXON (*Athenæum*, December 25, 1858).

Physical weakness—Nervousness in public.

It was often a regret with the subject of this life, that while young he had not been called to the bar. But he would have made no figure in court. His *physique* would have betrayed him; the drudgery would have repelled him; and his nervousness in public would have been against him. His life was marred by the incessant wear of a painful disease. He often wrote while the movement of his pen was fierce pain to him. He dictated humorous articles while writhing in agony; he worked at his web of quaint ideas when, in a dark room, his passed six weeks waiting for his sight. But though the spirit would have been strong to battle against these ills he could not have commanded the body. He wrote for *Punch*, at the Malvern water-cure, whither he had been carried, motionless with rheumatism. He penned "A Day at the Reculvers," and some of the "Clovernook Chronicles," while his old enemy gnawed at his bones, and just before he was carried in an arm-chair on board the Herne Bay boat, bound for London. His spirit seemed to shine the clearer through the ills of his flesh. But an active life would have overtaxed his feeble body; an oversensitive nature would have kept him in the background in a court of law. . . . He a barrister! Why, even latterly the thought of making a public speech unnerved him.—BLANCHARD JERROLD ("Life of Jerrold").

He loved to see men and women beating down difficulties of all or any kinds, or the heroism of patience plodding through dull years, cheerful to the end of the task. In his study, if a passage from Shakespeare was in question, he would go to his shelves, lift Mrs. Cowden Clarke's "Concordance" from its well-known corner, and, laying his hand upon the cover, would say invariably, before opening it, "The work of a noble little woman." He would turn the closely printed pages over, and bid every body present mark the extraordinary quantity of matter that was contained between the solid morocco boards. And then he would close the volume, and as he carried it back to its honored place upon his shelves, he would repeat—"And all that was done by one noble little woman."—BLANCHARD JERROLD ("Best of all Good Company").

Appreciation of honest work.

He had an almost reverential fondness for books—books themselves—and said he could not bear to treat them, or to see them treated, with disrespect. He told us it gave him pain to see them turned on their faces, stretched open, or dog's-eared, or carelessly flung down, or in any way misused. He told us this holding a volume in his hand with a caressing gesture, as though he tendered it affectionately and gratefully for the pleasure it had given him.—C. and M. C. CLARKE ("Recollections of Writers").

Reverence for books.

In this tragedy ("The Painter of Ghent") the author appeared on the stage, acting "Roderick." His success was not marked; and after playing during a fortnight, he most wisely abandoned an

As an actor.

idea, very hastily taken, of realizing upon the stage some of his own creations. His subsequent successes as an amateur prove that he had a fine, indeed, an exquisite—sense of the more delicate touches by which character is perfectly rendered on the mimic scene. As "Master Stephen," in "Every Man in his Humor," he contrasted in no sense unfavorably even with the masterly "Bobadil" presented by Mr. Charles Dickens.—BLANCHARD JERROLD ("Life of Jerrold").

The author stronger than the actor.

It was our happy fortune to be present on most of the first nights of representation of his numerous dramas, including "The Painter of Ghent," in which he himself acted the principal character when it was originally brought out at the Standard Theatre. . . . As the piece proceeded, and came to the point where Ichabod the Jew, speaking of his lost son, has to say, "He was a healing jewel to mine eye—a staff of cedar in my hand—a fountain at my foot," the actor who was playing the character made a mistake in the words, and substituted something of his own, saying, "a well-spring" instead of "a fountain." A pause ensued; neither he nor Jerrold going on for some minutes. Afterwards, talking over the event of the night with him, he told us that when his interlocutor altered the words of the dialogue, he had turned towards him and whispered fiercely, "It's neither a well-spring nor a pump; and till you give me the right cue, I shan't go on." A more significant proof that the author in Jerrold was far stronger than the actor could hardly be adduced. —C. and M. C. CLARKE ("Recollections of Writers").

His great accomplishment . . . was whistling. A love of country life—its sights, and sounds, and scents, to all of which he was sensitive to the very verge of pain—gave him, first a familiarity, then a command, over all the notes of birds; and he would bring him in his suburban garden troops of thrushes, robins, blackbirds, sparrows, which seemed to know him by a natural instinct as a true friend and leal protector. Born under Bow bells, he used to mock at cockneys born and reared in the country, for their ignorance of the voices and ways of birds. If you heard in the leaves about Putney Common, or later in the meadows near West End, a whistle of peculiar strength and sweetness, you felt sure that Jerrold would turn up at the next stile or the first bend of the road. Sometimes, when kept waiting, his pipe tuned up in a drawing-room, to the astonishment, no doubt, of Jeames, but the great amusement of Jeames's mistress. "Couldn't you whistle that again?" pleaded Mrs. Godwin coaxingly to her youthful visitor, after stealing on a prelude of the kind.—Hepworth Dixon (*Athenæum*, December 25, 1858). *Whistling.*

A traveller, early on his way to Richmond, passing over the then picturesque heath of Putney, some twenty years ago in the summer time, would probably see, by the gypsies' tent, a short gentleman, with wild iron gray hair peeping from under his straw hat; a sharp, bright eye, and a lip with mocking corners to it; chattering with the gypsies, who would lie upon the grass, shielding their eyes from the sun with their chestnut hands, and laugh at *At sunrise on the heath.*

their neighbor from the snug lodge yonder, curtained in lime-trees, and musical with a little farmyard at the back. I am sure the stranger would hardly have paused to listen to the *badinage*, nor to mark a point of eccentricity in the owner of the lodge. I am quite sure the gypsies themselves, who were old friends and neighbors of Douglas Jerrold, never saw any thing more in him than a lively gentleman, who was very fond of early morning on the heath; who appeared to love the yellow furze very much, and pick it very often, and hold it apparently with great pleasure between his lips, while bending himself back, a little painfully, leaning on his stick he watched the sky-promises of the opening day.—BLANCHARD JERROLD ("Best of all Good Company").

At sunrise on the heath.

It is a bright morning, about eight o'clock, at West Lodge, Putney Lower Common. The windows at the side of the old house, buried in trees, afford glimpses of a broad common, tufted with purple heather and yellow gorse. Gypsies are encamped where the blue smoke curls amid the elms. A window sash is shot sharply up. A clear, small voice is heard singing within. And now a long roulade, whistled softly, floats out. A little, spare figure, with a stoop, habited in a short shooting-jacket, the throat quite open, without collar or kerchief, and crowned with a straw hat, pushes through the gate of the cottage, and goes, with short, quick steps, assisted by a stout stick, over the common. A little black and tan terrier follows, and rolls over the grass at intervals, as a response to a cheery

A day at home.

word from its master. The gypsy encampment is reached. The gypsies know their friend, and a chat and a laugh ensue. Then a deep gulp of the sweet morning air, a dozen branches pulled to the nose, here and there in the garden, the children kissed, and breakfast, and the morning papers. *A day at home.*

The breakfast is a jug of cold new milk ; some toast, bacon, water-cresses. Perhaps a few strawberries have been found in the garden. A long examination of the papers—here and there a bit of news energetically read aloud, then cut, and put between clippers. Then silently, suddenly into the study. *Household ways.*

This study is a very snug room. All about it are books. Crowning the shelves are Milton and Shakespeare. A bit of Shakespeare's mulberry-tree lies upon the mantel-piece. Above the sofa are "The Rent Day," and "Distraining for Rent," Wilkie's two pictures, in the corner of which is Wilkie's kind inscription to the author of the drama, called "The Rent Day." Under the two prints hangs Sir Joshua's sly "Puck," perched upon a pulpy mushroom. Turner's "Heidelberg" is here too. . . . The furniture is simple solid oak. The desk has not a speck upon it. The marble shell, upon which the inkstand rests, has no litter in it. Various notes lie in a row, between clips, on the table. . . . The little dog follows his master into his study, and lies at his feet. *His study.*

Work begins. If it be a comedy, the author will now and then walk rapidly up and down the room, talking wildly to himself ; if it be *Punch* copy, you shall hear him laugh presently as he hits upon *At work.*

At work.

a droll bit. Suddenly the pen will be put down, and through a little conservatory, without seeing anybody, the author will pass out into the garden, where he will talk to the gardener, or watch, chuckling the while, the careful steps of the little terrier amid the gooseberry bushes; or pluck a hawthorn leaf, and go nibbling it, and thinking, down the side-walks.

In again, and vehemently to work. The thought has come; and in letters smaller than the type in which they shall presently be set, it is unrolled along the little blue slips of paper. A simple crust of bread and a glass of wine, are brought in by a dear female hand; but no word is spoken, and the hand and dear heart disappear. The work goes rapidly forward, and halts at last suddenly. The pen is dashed aside; a few letters, seldom more than three lines in each, are written, and dispatched to the post; and then again into the garden. The fowls and pigeons are noticed; a visit is paid to the horse and cow; then another long turn round the lawn; at last a seat, with a quaint old volume, in the tent, under the umbrageous mulberry-tree.

Entertaining his friends.

Friends drop in, and join Jerrold in his tent. Who will stop to dinner? Only cottage fare; but there is a hearty welcome. . . . At a hint the host is up, and on his way to discover to his visitor the beauties and conveniences of his cottage. The mulberry-tree especially always comes in for a glowing account of its rich fruitfulness; and the asparagus-bed owes a heavy debt of gratitude to its master. The guest may be a phlegmatic person, and may wearily follow his excited host, as he wanders

enthusiastically from one advantageous point to another; but the host is in downright earnest about his fruit-trees, as he is about everything else. He laughingly insists that his cabbages cost him at least a shilling apiece; and that cent. per cent. is the loss on his fowls' eggs. Still he relishes the cabbages and the eggs, and the first dish of asparagus from his own garden marks a red-letter day to him. Perhaps he will be carried away by his enthusiasm as the sun goes down, and will be seen still in his straw hat, watering the geraniums, or clearing the flies from the roses. Dinner, if there be no visitors, will be at four. In the summer, a cold quarter of lamb and salad, and a raspberry tart, with a little French wine in the tent; and a cigar. Then a short nap—forty winks—upon the great sofa in the study; and another long stroll over the lawn, while the young members play bowls, and the tea is prepared in the tent.

Entertaining his friends.

Over the tea-table jokes of all kinds, as at dinner. No friend who may happen to drop in now, will make any difference in the circle. Perhaps the fun may be extended to a game of some kind, on the lawn. Basting the bear was, one evening, the rule, on which occasion grave editors and contributors "basted" one another with knotted pocket-handkerchiefs, to their hearts' content. The crowning effort of this memorable evening was a general attempt to go heels over head upon hay-cocks in the orchard—a feat which vanquished the skill of the laughing host, and left a very stout and very responsible editor, I remember, upon his head, without power to retrieve his natural position. Again: after a dinner-

At play.

At play.

party under canvas, the hearty host, with his guests, including Mr. Charles Dickens, Mr. Maclise, Mr. Macready, and Mr. John Forster, indulged in a most active game of leap-frog, the backs being requested to turn in any obtrusive "twopenny" with the real zest of fourteen! Never were boys more completely possessed by the spirit of the game in a seminary playground; and foremost among the players and laughers was the little figure of Douglas Jerrold, his hair flowing wildly, and his face radiant with pleasure. He could never dance a step, nor master a simple figure of a quadrille; still, let there be dancing carried on in a hearty spirit, and you would presently find him borne away by the gayety of the scene, endeavoring to persuade a lady to try a step with him, and to prevent his "turning up in wrong places." Having fairly bewildered his partner, and vanquished all her efforts to keep him in his proper position, he would at last take her back to her seat, convulsed with laughter over his own awkwardness. In any active grace he was singularly deficient. He could never draw a straight line, nor play any game that required manual skill; nor carve the plainest joint, nor ride a horse, nor draw a cork. He dashed gallantly at each accomplishment, but gave it up after a vehement but fruitless effort. . . . His evenings at home, when not devoted to writing (and in the latter years of his life he seldom wrote after dinner), were spent usually alone in his study, with some favorite author; or throwing off rapid letters of invitation, acknowledgment of invitations, or suggestions of service to friends. . . . Sometimes, tired of reading and letter-writing, he would

Awkwardness—Vivacity.

join the family circle for half an hour before going to bed, and joke over the supper-table, listening to stories about the dog or parrot; or his door would be heard on the move, and his step on the stairs, on his way to bed, perhaps at ten o'clock. Occasionally he enjoyed a game at whist or drafts, in the winter; but his rule was a solitary evening in his study, with his books.—BLANCHARD JERROLD ("Life of Jerrold").

Awkwardness—Vivacity.

Douglas Jerrold at home, might generally be found on Sundays surrounded, not by big-wigs who would have been glad to find themselves in his society—not by old, serious professors of all branches of learning—certainly not—but by young men yet unknown to fame. He loved the buoyancy, heartiness, and the boldness of youth. It was his glory to have about him six or seven youngsters, hardly reached their majority, with whom he could talk pleasantly, and to whom he poured out his jokes, grateful for the heartiness of the reception they got from warm blood. It was the main thing about his individuality that he was himself always young. "A man is as old as he feels," he insisted continually; and then casting back the solid flakes of his silvered hair, he would laugh and vow that few men of five-and-twenty were younger than he. His words, when he spoke seriously among his guests, generally conveyed some generous advice, or some offer of service.—BLANCHARD JERROLD ("Life of Jerrold").

Liking for young men.

Any thing that occurred in Douglas Jerrold's house that had a humorous touch in it, was given

forth always as heartily and unreservedly as he would have said it to an absent child. He would never be a conventional host. You must sit at his table as though it were your own. He would ask you to condemn the wine or meats if he thought either bad, appealing to you as a perfectly free critic. Reserve, secretiveness, he could in no sense understand. Praise or blame must come in a free current from him. Just as he could amuse himself talking and joking freely with a child, he must be with every person who approached him. If he were angry, you were quite certain about it. The anger came forth in red-hot words, the meaning of which never admitted two interpretations. Pleased, he talked his inmost thoughts to you, and was astonished and disgusted whenever he learned that only half a truth or reason had been given to him.—BLANCHARD JERROLD ("Life of Jerrold").

Unreserve.

He was the most helpless among men. He never brushed his hat; never opened a drawer to find a collar; never knew where he had put his stick. Every thing must be to his hand. His toilet was performed usually with his back to the glass. It mattered not to him that his kerchief was awry. "Plain linen and country washing" he used to cite as all a man need care for, in the matter of dress. He was, however, passionately fond of any kind of new preparation for shaving—of any newly invented strop or razor. He had these things in immense quantities, and seldom tried each more than once. If a thing did not succeed in the first trial it was

Helplessness—Fondness for novelties.

cast aside forever. Patent corkscrews, coffee-pots, watches, knives, and lamps delighted him. If he saw something new he must have it instantly. Struck by a waistcoat in a shop-window, he must go in, try it on, and if it fit him, wear it on the spot, sending home that in which he left his house. One day he returned home with an instrument shaped like a horseshoe, within the magic circle of which were hooks to take stones from the equine hoof, little saws, a gimlet, a corkscrew, a boothook, etc. And he carried this curious instrument about with him for some time, highly pleased with the skill the workman had exhibited in cramming so many utensils in so confined a space.—BLANCHARD JERROLD ("Life of Jerrold").

Helplessness—Fondness for novelties.

Dr. Wigan, in his book on the "Duality of the Mind," gives the following remarkable anecdote of my father's energetic will dominating a feeble body:—

Strength of will.

"That mysterious and incomprehensible thing, the *will*, has, we know, an important influence on the whole animal economy, and many instances have come before us where it has staved off insanity; others where it has aided in restoring health. I will cite a case which is well known to me, and which exemplifies this action, although unconnected with insanity. A celebrated man of literature, dependent for his income on the labors of his pen—feeding his family, as he jocularly calls it, out of an inkstand—was in the advanced stage of a severe illness. After many hesitations he ventured to ask his medical attendant if there remained any hope. The doc-

tor evaded the embarrassing question as long as possible, but at last was compelled sorrowfully to acknowledge that there was none.

Strength of will.

"'What!' said the patient, 'die, and leave my wife and five helpless children! By ——, I won't die!'

"If there be oaths which the recording angel is ashamed to write down, this was one of them! The patient got better from that hour."—BLANCHARD JERROLD ("Life of Jerrold").

The leading characteristic of Douglas Jerrold's nature was earnestness. He was earnest in his abhorrence of all things mean and interested; earnest in his noble indignation at wrong and oppression; earnest in the very wit with which he vented his sense of detestation for evil-doing. He was deeply earnest in all serious things; and very much in earnest when dealing with less apparently important matters, which he thought needed the scourge of a sarcasm. Any one who could doubt the earnestness of Jerrold should have seen him when a child was the topic; the fire of his eye, the quiver of his lip, bore witness to the truth of the phrase he himself uses in his charming drama of "The Schoolfellows," showing that to him indeed "children are sacred things."—MARY COWDEN CLARKE ("Recollections of Writers").

Earnestness.

He always liked to see something of the combative spirit in boys. I can remember that, when I was a child about seven years old, he knelt one day upon the lawn behind his house in Thistle Grove, Chel-

Pugnacity.

sea, and, calling me to him, gave me a lesson in sparring. I was, of course, afraid to strike out; but he repeatedly shouted to me to hit hard, and to aim at his head. . . . The pugnacious element was peculiar to him decidedly. It is clear, unmistakable in all his writings—it gave a zest to his conversation. It extended to physical prowess; for he, borne down by rheumatism, was heard, in a moment of anger, to threaten the eviction of a gentleman standing six feet, by the window. He would wander in after-life through the most lonely places at any hour of the night, calm as in his own study. I call to mind an occasion on which when walking home with him, a gardener, a square, strong man, hustled me as he passed. The father turned upon him, and bade him, "take care of the child." The man replied with a gross impertinence. In a minute the father's hat and stick were in my trembling hands, and a hard blow would have been dealt in a minute had not the burly workman, cowed by the fierceness of his little opponent, slunk away.—BLANCHARD JERROLD ("Life of Jerrold").

Pugnacity.

My father might have pushed more rapidly forward to comfort in his early days had he possessed a more pliant nature; but his road was straight ahead. You might cast barricades in his way, and slyly invite him to walk around the obstruction, and so, but only for a moment, turn from his appointed way; but no, you could not make him step a foot aside. There were barricades before him, bristling far above his head. Still, he kept his eye firmly upon them—cast back the tumbled masses of his

Persistency.

Persistency.

hair; dashed forward—and presently the little figure, with dilated eye and distended nostril, and scorn trembling in the downcast mouth, was on the barricades' topmost point.—BLANCHARD JERROLD ("Life of Jerrold").

A fighting liberal.

Douglas Jerrold was enthusiastic on the popular side. . . . He never cared to dabble in statistics proving the exact sum given away in sinecures—to weigh to a scruple the influence of the House of Lords in the House of Commons. He took broad, patent facts, great, indisputable wrongs, and drove sharp epigrams into the heart of them, or entangled them in the mazes of some bright fancies, or heightened their hideousness to the dull public eye by dexterous and picturesque contrasts. This was the work accomplished in *Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper* while Douglas Jerrold was its editor.—BLANCHARD JERROLD ("Life of Jerrold").

Grief for a friend.

I remember the morning well. I remember finding my father in a room, alone, at the *Punch* office.[1] His face was white as any paper, and his voice had lost all its clear, sharp ring. "You have heard, I suppose?" he said to me presently. I nodded an assent. But though he twitched his mouth manfully, tried to look out of the window, and had resolved to bear the blow stoically, the effort was too much for him. He sank upon his chair, and, motioning me from the room, wept as children weep.

At his friend's grave his grief was so completely

[1] He had just heard of the death of his friend Laman Blanchard.

beyond control that he was carried from the ground; and for months afterwards, alone in his study, this sarcastic, "bitter" writer—this "cynic," who saw nothing good nor true in the world—was heard by his frightened wife, calling aloud in a voice nearly choked by tears, upon his lost companion to come to him.—BLANCHARD JERROLD ("Life of Jerrold").

Grief for a friend.

On the occasion of the first performance of Jerrold's comedy of "Time Works Wonders," I had the good fortune to occupy a seat in his private box, and I well remember his feeling of delight, at the close, when he contemplated the success he had achieved. . . . Arrived at the door of the hotel, I could not help repeating the gratification I felt at the author's well-merited triumph, when Jerrold, turning his eye full upon me, and smacking his chest with his hand, exclaimed, with a degree of exultation which was most natural under the circumstances, "Yes; and here's the little man that's done it!"—GEORGE HODDER ("Memories of My Time").[1]

"The little man that's done it."

Few of his friends, I think, can have had more favorable opportunities of knowing him in his gentlest and most affectionate aspect than I have had. He was one of the gentlest and most affectionate of men. I remember very well that when I first saw him, in about the year 1835, when I went into his sick-room in Thistle Grove, Brompton, and found

The tribute of Dickens.

[1] Hodder (George). Memories of My Time. 8vo. London, 1870.

The tribute of Dickens.

him propped up in a great chair, bright-eyed, and quick, and eager in spirit, but very lame in body, he gave me an impression of tenderness. It never became dissociated from him. There was nothing cynical or sour in his heart, as I knew it. In the company of children and young people he was particularly happy, and showed to extraordinary advantage. He never was so gay, so sweet-tempered, so pleasing, and so pleased as then. Among my own children I have observed this many and many a time. When they and I came home from Italy, in 1845, your father went to Brussels to meet us, in company with our friends, Mr. Forster and Mr. Maclise. We all travelled together about Belgium for a little while, and all came home together. He was the delight of the children all the time, and they were his delight. He was in his most brilliant spirits, and I doubt if he were ever more humorous in his life. But the most enduring impression he left upon us, who are grown up—and we have all often spoken of it since—was, that Jerrold, in his amiable capacity of being easily pleased, in his freshness, in his good nature, in his cordiality, and in the unrestrained openness of his heart, had quite captivated us.

Of his generosity I had a proof within two or three years, which it saddens me now to think of. There had been an estrangement between us—not on any personal subject, and not involving an angry word—and a good many months had passed without my even seeing him in the street, when it fell out that we dined each with his own separate party, in the Stranger's Room of a club. Our chairs were almost back to back, and I took mine after he was

seated and at dinner. I said not a word (I am sorry to remember), and did not look that way. Before we had sat so long, he openly wheeled his chair around, stretched out both his hands in a most engaging manner, and said aloud, with a bright and loving face that I can see as I write to you, "For God's sake let us be friends again! A life's not long enough for this!"—CHARLES DICKENS (quoted in the "Life of Jerrold").

The tribute of Dickens.

His fight for fame was long and hard; and his life was interrupted, like that of other men, by sickness and pain. In the stoop in his gait, in the lines in his face, you saw the man who had reached his Ithaca by no mere yachting over summer seas. And hence, no doubt, the utter absence in him of all that conventionalism which marks the man of quiet experience and habitual conformity to the world. In the streets a stranger would have known Jerrold to be a remarkable man; you would have gone away speculating on him. In talk he was still Jerrold; not Douglas Jerrold, Esq., a successful gentleman, whose heart and soul you were expected to know nothing about, and with whom you were to eat your dinner peaceably, like any common man. No; he was at all times Douglas the peculiar and unique—with his history in his face, and his genius on his tongue—nay, and after a little, with his heart on his sleeve. This made him piquant; and the same character makes his writings piquant. Hence, too, he is often quaint—a word which describes what no other word does, and conveys a sense of originality. . . . He united re-

A general view of his character.

A general view of his character.

markable simplicity of character with brilliancy of talk. For instance, with all his success, he never sought higher society than that which he found himself gradually and by a natural momentum borne into, as he advanced. He never suppressed a flash of indignant sarcasm for fear of startling the "genteel" classes and Mrs. Grundy. He never aped aristocracy in his household. He would go to a tavern for his oysters and a glass of punch, as simply as they did in Ben Jonson's days. . . . This kind of thing stamped him, in our polite days, as one of the old school, and was refreshing to observe in an age when the anxious endeavor of the English middle classes is to hide their plebeian origin under a mockery of patrician elegance. He had none of the airs of success or reputation—none of the affectations, either personal or social, which are rife every where. He was manly and natural —free and off-handed to the verge of eccentricity. Independence and marked character seemed to breathe from the little, rather bowed figure, crowned with a lion-like head and falling light hair —to glow in the keen, eager blue eyes glancing on either side as he walked along. Nothing could be less commonplace, nothing less conventional, than his appearance in a room or in the streets.—JAMES HANNAY (quoted in the "Life of Jerrold").

Love of the sea.

He never . . . ceased to be, at heart—a sailor. He loved the sea—was proud of British oak. Its dashing, careless, hearty phases were suited to his nature. He often said that had the war lasted, and had his strength held out, he would have been

somebody in his Majesty's service.[1] And you could not please him more thoroughly at the seaside, than by proposing a day in a cutter. His eye would light up, and he would hasten to the shore to talk the matter over with the sailors, himself. They drove a good bargain with him, for he could never haggle over shillings, and they liked his frank familiar manner. It was delightful to see his little figure planted in the stern-sheets, his face radiant, his hair flowing in the wind; mouth and nostrils drawing in, with huge content, the saline breeze. The energy with which his glass was raised when a sail appeared; the delight he expressed when the sailors confirmed his description of the craft; the keen attention he gave to any stories of wrecks or storms told by the crew—all these signs of enjoyment recalled the midshipman.—BLANCHARD JERROLD ("Life of Jerrold").

Love of the sea.

One of my earliest and most agreeable reminiscences of Jerrold brings me to a period which at once suggests many occurrences of peculiar interest. . . . It was in the year 1841; and Jerrold had for some time domiciled himself and his family at a snug little villa at Boulogne. . . . Jerrold had often written to friends in London, apprising them of the comfortable quarters he was housed in, and inviting them to partake of his hospitality. Amongst those who were thus favored was myself, and I well remember the cordial terms in which the invita-

Life at Boulogne.

[1] From December, 1813, to October, 1815, Jerrold was a midshipman in the royal service.

Life at Boulogne.

tion was conveyed. . . . Long before I was enabled to leave the deck of the vessel, I descried, to my infinite delight, Jerrold standing as near to the landing-place as the crowd would permit him; and the moment he saw me he gave me such a "sweet smile of welcome" that I could but feel what a care-dispelling visit fortune had placed in store for me. Then came the hearty shake of the hand, and the joke—far, far indeed from a "bitter" one—and the delay during the tedious ceremony at the custom-house. . . . Arrived at Jerrold's dwelling he exclaimed, as we entered, placing himself in a sort of theatrical attitude, "The bandit's haunt! Let us see what fare we have within!" I very soon found, however, that his habits were by no means of a melodramatic cast, and that he was surrounded by every comfort, not to say luxury, which could be desired by a contented and united English family abroad. His children were at home from school that day, and I was much impressed by the pride and pleasure he seemed to feel in introducing them, and in pointing out jocosely their several characteristics.

He occupied himself "at his desk" (as he always expressed it when speaking of his mental employment) in the morning; and in the afternoon he was ready for a walk along the sands, or an excursion into the market-place to amuse himself with the fruit-vendors, or for a jaunt into the country to one of the many attractive little villas which lie within a few miles' distance of Boulogne. A dip in the sea—his native element, as he sometimes called it—was a relaxation to which he was especially addicted; but

he did not care to indulge in it where the multitude was wont to assemble for the same object. On one occasion I was walking with him at sunset along the beach, in the outskirts of the town, when the tide was unusually low, and the sands were as smooth and unruffled as a drawing-room carpet. The charm of the weather seemed to absorb Jerrold's attention, for the evening was as calm and pleasant as the countenance of a sleeping infant, and he made frequent allusions to the atmosphere, which, he said, was such as he had never experienced "out of France." At length, fixing his eye upon the almost motionless sea, and inhaling the fresh air as if he were sipping nectar, he suddenly exclaimed, "How lovely the water looks! Egad, I'll have a dip!" and in scarcely more time than is occupied by the pantomime clown in making his inevitable "change," he stuck his stick in the sand, placed his hat upon the top and his clothes around it, and ran into the water with a nimbleness which he could hardly have surpassed in the midshipman days of his youth. . . . .

Life at Boulogne.

In the simplicity of his heart, . . . he had a most amiable predilection for giving juvenile parties—that is to say, parties consisting of his two daughters and certain of their school companions; and on those occasions he included in the programme of the evening's amusements "acting charades," in which the principal performers were himself, Mr. and Mrs. Wigan, and M. Bonnefoy, the preceptor of his three boys. With what impulsive delight he entered into the spirit of those entertainments may be imagined by those who are not

Life at Boulogne.

unmindful of the energy he displayed when subjecting himself to the ordeal of the stage. . . . But the greatest charm of all to be found in these merry *soirées* was gathered from the graceful agility of the juvenile ladies, who would commence a dance in the drawing-room and continue it in the garden, under the light of the moon. . . . The entire bevy of young damsels being dressed in white muslin, the effect of their evolutions, as they tripped round the greensward at the back of the house, was certainly suggestive of a scene from one of those ever-captivating fairy stories, which are the delight of age no less than of youth. . . . Many years have elapsed since those happy times, and I have often reverted to them with a feeling full of gratitude for the enjoyment I then experienced. . . . I shall ever be keenly alive to the conviction that at no period of my career have I partaken of more unalloyed pleasure—more innocent and healthful amusement, than I enjoyed under the roof-tree of Douglas Jerrold, at Boulogne-sur-Mer. — GEORGE HODDER ("Memories of My Time").

CHARLES DICKENS.

1812–1870.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

DICKENS had some highly disagreeable traits, which it would be pleasant to leave unnoticed. Unfortunately, they were so obvious, and asserted themselves in so pronounced a manner, that it is quite impossible to ignore them, even in the briefest estimate of his character.

"Remember that for my biography!" he said to Forster, quite gravely, after telling him that he had risen from his bed, in the middle of the night, to practise a polka-step which his little daughter had been at some pains to teach him. Self-consciousness and egotism are conspicuous in every account of him. His talk and his letters are full of references to his own works, and of descriptions of his own exploits and successes. His house was filled with pictures illustrating his own writings.

His vulgarity showed itself in many ways; most noticeably, perhaps, but not alone, in his love for gaudy clothes and Hebraic adornments. Well would it be were this all! But it exhibited itself in many other ways. The lack of reserve, of delicacy, of fine instinct in matters of feeling, all bear their testimony. Vulgarity of sentiment is a grave

charge to bring against one who has appealed so powerfully to the sentiment of the world. It might be substantiated by many undoubted facts of his life ; but the task would be as unpleasant as needless; and one illustration will be found amply sufficient.

Dickens told Forster that "Dora" was a portrait of a veritable woman, his own first love, and that the description of "David's" passion was a record of his own experience. He assured him that the actual passion had been most profound and sincere, and that its ardor had far exceeded his powers of description. The real Dora, however, was not destined to become Dickens's wife, nor did she die. Dickens met her in later life ; found her absurd and preposterous, and held her up to ridicule as "Flora Finching," the full-blown widow who prattles so volubly in "Little Dorrit." This latter fact he also imparted to Forster. He told all this freely to his chosen biographer, and Forster has faithfully recorded it, without making any comment, either upon the essential indecency of the whole proceeding, or the singular unconsciousness which permitted his friend to make such damaging confessions. Let us turn to a more agreeable aspect of our subject.

A striking quality in Dickens is his ceaseless activity. His motto might well have been, like "Young Rapid's" in the play, "Keep moving!" He expended more energy upon his recreations than most men give to their business ; and what was repose to him would generally be deemed pretty severe labor. Combined with this activity and

energy, he had a regularity of habit, and a precise orderliness, not common in literary men. As an editor and as a theatrical manager he showed great ability, and he would certainly have excelled in most positions requiring executive powers of a high order.

Unfailing good spirits, and exhaustless resources of drollery and whimsicality, made him a companion of the most entertaining kind ; but he has a higher claim to regard than that of mere good-fellowship. He was thoroughly kind-hearted, and his kindness found expression in the most practical helpfulness. It was not merely that he was generous in his gifts of money ; he was even more generous in the costlier sacrifices of time and labor. Forster's work is full of instances. It tells of prefaces written for needy and incompetent authors ; of faulty manuscripts so revised that they became fit for publication ; of benefits organized, readings and theatrical performances given, for all sorts of charitable objects ; of dying men cheered and comforted by friendly visits.

It is worthy of note that two of his most enthusiastic admirers were critics of peculiar keenness and severity. Jeffrey's letters to him have a warmth of expression which is sometimes almost extravagant. He addresses him as "My dear, dear Dickens !— and dearer every day!" And there has been no higher eulogy of him than that of Thomas Carlyle, who certainly was not wont to flatter either the living or the dead.[1]

[1] See p. 231.

John Forster's "Life of Dickens" is the principal authority. Dr. R. S. Mackenzie's memoir will also be found interesting and suggestive. Percy Fitzgerald's "Recreations of a Literary Man" contains much information about Dickens's editorial life, and gives some pleasant glimpses of him in his home at Gadshill. Mr. Fitzgerald also gives a valuable collection of anecdotes and reminiscences, by many writers. Dickens's "Letters," edited by his daughter and his sister-in-law, should be read in connection with Forster's work.

The following works also deserve attention: Charles Kent's "Dickens as a Reader;" C. and M. C. Clarke's "Recollections of Writers;" James T. Fields's "Yesterdays with Authors," and R. H. Shepherd's edition of "Dickens' Plays and Poems." Mr. Shepherd, in his introduction and notes, furnishes much biographical information. The following magazine articles are to be mentioned: Sir Arthur Helps, in *Macmillan's Magazine*, July, 1870; an anonymous article, entitled "Dickens's Private Theatricals," in *Macmillan's Magazine*, January, 1871; and two articles, by R. H. Horne, entitled "Bygone Celebrities," in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, February and May, 1871, describing Dickens as an actor and manager, Mr. Horne having himself been a member of the amateur company. The latest work of importance is A. W. Ward's volume in the "English Men of Letters" series.

LEADING EVENTS OF DICKENS'S LIFE.

1812. Born, February 7th, at Landport, in Portsea.

1822.[1]—(Aged 10.) Employed in Warren's Blacking Manufactory in London.

1824. (*circa.*)—(Aged 12.) At Wellington House Academy.

1827.—(Aged 15.) A lawyer's clerk in London.

1831.—(Aged 19.) A Parliamentary stenographic reporter.[2]

1833.—(Aged 21.) Publishes in the old *Monthly Magazine*, his first work, "A Dinner at Poplar Walk."

1835.—(Aged 23.) Writes sketches for the *Monthly Magazine*, the *Evening Chronicle*, and *Bell's Life*.

1836.—(Aged 24.) Marries Miss Catherine Hogarth. "The Strange Gentleman," a farce, and "Village Coquettes," an opera, are performed at the St. James's Theatre. Publishes "Sketches by Boz," and the first numbers[3] of "Pickwick."

1837.—(Aged 25.) "Is She his Wife?" a farce, is performed at the St. James's Theatre. Edits *Bentley's Miscellany*, in which "Oliver Twist" is published. Finishes "Pickwick."

1838.—(Aged 26.) Finishes "Oliver Twist." Edits "Grimaldi's Memoirs." Publishes the first numbers of "Nicholas Nickleby."

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[1] The author of a recent work upon the youth of Dickens (Langton (Robert). The Childhood and Youth of Charles Dickens. 12mo. Manchester, 1883) questions Forster's accuracy as to this date, and believes that 1824 was the date of Dickens's employment in Warren's manufactory. The evidence, however, seems scarcely strong enough to discredit Forster's statement.

[2] He was for some time employed as a reporter in an office in Doctor's Commons, before he became a reporter of Parliamentary debates.

[3] Dickens's longer stories were all published in monthly parts.

1839.—(Aged 27.) Finishes "Nicholas Nickleby." Resigns the editorship of *Bentley's Miscellany.*

1840.—(Aged 28.) Publishes the first numbers of "Master Humphrey's Clock," including "The Old Curiosity Shop," and "Barnaby Rudge."

1841.—(Aged 29.) Finishes "Master Humphrey's Clock."

1842.—(Aged 30.) Visits the United States in January. Returns to England in June. Publishes "American Notes" in October.

1843.—(Aged 31.) Publishes "A Christmas Carol," and the first numbers of "Martin Chuzzlewit."

1844.—(Aged 32.) Visits Italy with his family. Publishes the last numbers of "Martin Chuzzlewit."

1845.—(Aged 33.) Returns to England in June. Appears as "Captain Bobadil," in September. Publishes "The Chimes."

1846.—(Aged 34.) Publishes "The Cricket on the Hearth," "Pictures from Italy," "The Battle of Life," and the first numbers of "Dombey & Son." Goes to Switzerland with his family.

1847.—(Aged 35.) Returns to England.

1848.—(Aged 36.) Publishes "The Haunted Man," and finishes "Dombey & Son." Plays "Shallow," in "The Merry Wives of Windsor."

1849.—(Aged 37.) Publishes the first numbers of "David Copperfield."

1850.—(Aged 38.) Edits *Household Words.* Finishes "David Copperfield."

1852.—(Aged 40.) Publishes the first numbers of "Bleak House."

1853.—(Aged 41.) Publishes "A Child's History of England," and the last numbers of "Bleak House." Gives his first public reading from his own works.

1854.—(Aged 42.) Publishes "Hard Times," and "The Seven Poor Travellers."

1855.—(Aged 43.) Publishes the first numbers of "Little Dorrit."

1857.—(Aged 45.) Finishes "Little Dorrit."

1858.—(Aged 46.) Separated from his wife.

1859.—(Aged 47.) Edits *All the Year Round.* Publishes "A Tale of Two Cities."

1860.—(Aged 48.) Publishes "The Uncommercial Traveller," and the first chapters of "Great Expectations," in *All the Year Round.*

1861.—(Aged 49.) Finishes "Great Expectations."

1864.—(Aged 52.) Publishes the first numbers of "Our Mutual Friend."

1865.—(Aged 53.) Finishes "Our Mutual Friend."

1867.—(Aged 55.) Visits the United States as a public reader.

1868.—(Aged 56.) Returns to England.

1870.—(Aged 58 years and 4 months.) Publishes the first numbers of "The Mystery of Edwin Drood." Dies, June 9th.

NOTE.—The editor would acknowledge his indebtedness to the excellent bibliography of Dickens, by Mr. Richard Herne Shepherd, published in Mr. S.'s edition of the "Plays and Poems of Dickens." 2 vols., 8vo. London, 1882.

CHARLES DICKENS.

HE was a very little and a very sickly boy. He was subject to attacks of violent spasm which disabled him for any active exertion. He was never a good little cricket-player. He was never a first-rate hand at marbles, or peg-top, or prisoner's base. But he had great pleasure in watching the other boys . . . at these games, reading while they played; and he had always the belief that this early sickness had brought to himself one inestimable advantage, in the circumstance of his weak health having strongly inclined him to reading. — JOHN FORSTER ("Life of Dickens").[1]

Boyhood.

Mr. Robert Langton, in his recent work upon the youth of Dickens,[2] quotes the following account by Mrs. Gibson, an aged woman who was formerly a servant in the Dickens family :—"'Little Charles Dickens was a terrible boy to read, and his custom was to sit with his book in his left hand, holding his wrist with his right hand, and constantly moving

[1] Forster (John). Life of Charles Dickens. 3 vols., 8vo. London, 1872–74.

[2] Langton (Robert). The Childhood and Youth of Charles Dickens. 12mo. Manchester, 1883.

Boyhood.

it up and down, and at the same time sucking his tongue. Sometimes Charles would come down stairs and say to me, "Now, Mary, clear the kitchen, we are going to have such a game," and then George Stronghill would come in with his Magic Lantern, and they would sing, recite, and perform parts of plays. Fanny and Charles often sang together at this time. . . . Though a good and eager reader in these days (about 1819) he had certainly not been to school, but had been thoroughly well taught at home by his aunt and mother. . . . A rather favorite piece for recitation by Charles at this time was "The Voice of the Sluggard" from Dr. Watts, and the little boy used to give it with great effect, and with *such* action and *such attitudes*.' Little Charles Dickens lives in Mrs. Gibson's memory as 'a lively boy of a good, genial, open disposition, and not quarrelsome as most children are at times.'"

At school.

I had the honor of being Mr. Dickens's schoolfellow for about two years (1824–1826), both being day-scholars at Mr. Jones's "Classical and Commercial Academy." . . . My recollection of Dickens whilst at school . . . is that of a healthy-looking boy, small but well built, with a more than usual flow of spirits, inducing to harmless fun, seldom or never I think to mischief, to which so many lads at that age are prone. I cannot recall any thing that then indicated he would hereafter become a literary celebrity; but perhaps he was too young then. He usually held his head more erect than lads ordinarily do, and there was a general smartness about him. His week-day dress of jacket and trousers, I can

clearly remember, was what is called pepper-and-salt; and, instead of the frill that most boys of his age wore then, he had a turn-down collar, so that he looked less youthful in consequence. He invented what we termed a "lingo," produced by the addition of a few letters of the same sound to every word; and it was our ambition, walking and talking thus along the street, to be considered foreigners.—OWEN P. THOMAS (quoted in Forster's "Life of Dickens"). *At school.*

I think at that time[1] Dickens took to writing small tales, and we had a sort of club for lending and circulating them. . . . We were very strong, too, in theatricals. We mounted small theatres, and got up very gorgeous scenery to illustrate the *Miller and his Men* and *Cherry and Fair Star*. Dickens's after taste for theatricals might have had its origin in these small affairs. — HENRY DANSON (quoted in Forster's "Life of Dickens").

Very different was his face in those days (1836) from that which photography has made familiar to the present generation. A look of youthfulness first attracted you, and then a candor and openness of expression which made you sure of the qualities within. The features were very good. He had a capital forehead, a firm nose with full wide nostril, eyes wonderfully beaming with intellect and running over with humor and cheerfulness, and a rather prominent mouth strongly marked with sensibility. *Personal appearance.*

[1] 1824–1826.

Personal appearance.

The head was altogether well formed and symmetrical, and the air and carriage of it were extremely spirited. The hair, so scant and grizzled in later days, was then of a rich brown and most luxuriant abundance, and the bearded face of his last two decades had hardly a vestige of hair or whisker ; but there was that in the face as I first recollect it which no time could change, and which remained implanted on it unalterably to the last. This was the quickness, keenness, and practical power, the eager, restless, energetic outlook on each several feature, that seemed to tell so little of a student or writer of books, and so much of a man of action and business in the world. Light and motion flashed from every part of it. *It was as if made of steel*, was said of it, four or five years after the time to which I am referring, by a most original and delicate observer, the late Mrs. Carlyle. "What a face is his to meet in a drawing-room!" wrote Leigh Hunt to me, the morning after I made them known to each other. "It has the life and soul in it of fifty human beings." In such sayings are expressed not alone the restless and resistless vivacity and force of which I have spoken, but that also which lay beneath them of steadiness and hard endurance. — JOHN FORSTER ("Life of Dickens").

What portrait can do justice to the frankness, kindness, and power of his eyes? They seemed to look through you, and yet only to take notice of what was best in you and most worthy of notice. And then his smile, which was most charming! And then his laughter—not poor, thin, arid, ambiguous

laughter, that is ashamed of itself, that moves one feature only of the face—but the largest and heartiest kind, irradiating his whole countenance, and compelling you to participate in his immense enjoyment of it.—ARTHUR HELPS (*Macmillan's Magazine*, July, 1870).

Personal appearance.

He is a fine little fellow—Boz, I think. Clear blue, intelligent eyes, eyebrows that he arches amazingly, large protrusive rather loose mouth, a face of most extreme *mobility*, which he shuttles about—eyebrows, eyes, mouth and all—in a very singular manner while speaking. Surmount this with a loose coil of common-colored hair, and set it on a small compact figure, very small, and dressed à la D'Orsay rather than well—this is Pickwick. For the rest, a quiet, shrewd-looking, little fellow, who seems to guess pretty well what he is and what others are. —THOMAS CARLYLE (from a letter of 1840, in Froude's "Carlyle").[1]

The following description of Dickens in his later years, is by the anonymous editor of a volume of Dickens's "Speeches:"[2] "A lithe, energetic man, of medium stature. . . . He has a broad, full brow, a fine head—which for a man of such power and energy, is singularly small at the base of the brain —and a clearly cut profile. . . . Mr. Dickens's eyes are light-blue, and his mouth and jaw, without

[1] Froude (James A.). Thomas Carlyle. A History of his Life in London. 1834–1881. 2 vols., 8vo. London, 1884.

[2] Dickens (Charles). Speeches, Literary and Social, by Charles Dickens. With Chapters on "Charles Dickens as a Letter Writer, Poet, and Public Reader." (Mayfair Library.) 16mo. London, 1880.

Personal appearance.

having any claim to beauty, possess a strength that is not concealed by the veil of iron-gray moustache and generous imperial. His head is but slightly graced with iron-gray hair, and his complexion is florid."

There never was a man so unlike a professional writer: of tall, wiry, energetic figure; brisk in movement; a head well set on; a face rather bronzed or sunburnt; keen, bright, searching eyes, and a mouth which was full of expression, though hidden behind a wiry moustache and grizzled beard. Thus the French painter's remark that "he was more like one of the old Dutch admirals we see in the picture galleries, than a man of letters," conveyed an admirably true idea to his friends. He had, indeed, much of the quiet, resolute manner of command of a captain of a ship. He trod along briskly as he walked; as he listened, his searching eye rested on you, and the nerves in his face quivered, much like those in the delicately formed nostrils of a finely bred dog. There was a curl or two in his hair at each side which was characteristic; and the jaunty way he wore his little morning hat, rather on one side, added to the effect. But when there was anything droll suggested, a delightful sparkle of lurking humor began to kindle and spread to his mouth, so that, even before he uttered anything, you felt that something irresistibly droll was at hand.—PERCY FITZGERALD ("Recreations of a Literary Man").[1]

[1] Fitzgerald (Percy). Recreations of a Literary Man. 2 vols., crown 8vo. London, 1882.

Personal appearance.

I see now the spare, almost feminine shoulders, . . . in which there was much expression—the line was so delicate and nervous.—PERCY FITZGERALD ("Recreations of a Literary Man").[1]

Dress.

Dickens's personal taste in dress was always "loud." He loved gay vests, glittering jewelry, showy satin stocks, and every thing rather *pronounc'*, yet no man had a keener or more unsparing critical eye for these vulgarities in others. He once gave to a friend a vest of a most gorgeous shawl-pattern. Soon after, at a party, he quizzed his friend most unmercifully for his stunning vest, although he had on him at that very moment, its twin-brother, or sister—whichever sex vests belong to.—R. SHELTON MACKENZIE ("Life of Dickens").[2]

A young lady of Cincinnati, who made a note of it at the time (1842), gives this recollection of his visit to that city: "I went last evening to a party at Judge Walker's, given to the hero of the day, Mr. Charles Dickens, . . . and had the honor of an introduction to him. . . . His manner is easy—negligent—but not elegant. His dress was foppish; in fact he was overdressed, yet his garments were worn so easily they appeared to be a necessary part of him. He had a dark coat with lighter pantaloons; a black waistcoat, embroidered with colored flowers;

[1] R. H. Shepherd's edition of Dickens' Plays and Poems has a valuable list of the portraits of Dickens, with a critical description of them.

[2] Mackenzie (Robert Shelton). Life of Charles Dickens. 12mo. Philadelphia, 1870.

Dress.

and about his neck, covering his white shirt-front, was a black neckcloth, also embroidered in colors, in which were placed two large diamond pins connected by a chain; a gold watch-chain, and a large red rose in his button-hole, completed his toilet."—R. SHELTON MACKENZIE ("Life of Dickens").

"Remember that for my biography!"

"Remember that for my biography!" he said to me gravely on twelfth-day in 1849, after telling me what he had done the night before; and as gravely I now redeem my laughing promise that I would. Little Mary and her sister Kate had taken much pains to teach their father the polka, that he might be able to dance it with them at their brother's birthday festivity; . . . and in the middle of the previous night as he lay in bed, the fear had fallen on him suddenly that the step was forgotten, and then and there, in that wintry dark cold night, he got out of bed to practise it. Any thing *more* characteristic could certainly not be told; unless I could have shown him dancing it afterwards, and far excelling the youngest performer in untiring vigor and vivacity.—JOHN FORSTER ("Life of Dickens").

Egotism.

Dickens filled his house with pictures illustrating his own works. His letters show, what several of his friends have described—a habit of quoting from his writings: "as—would say"—and then a quotation from "Micawber" or "Sam Weller." These are, perhaps, small matters, but they are suggestive.

In the spring of the year 1842 . . . I stopped a day or two at Cincinnati for the purpose of visit-

ing an old college friend. Upon my arrival there, my friend informed me that Mr. Charles Dickens was in town, and was to hold a levee at his hotel that morning. . . . There were not many persons in the room when we entered. Immediately behind us followed a small English gentleman of subdued and timid manners. Mr. Dickens was standing in front of the fire-place, with his coat-tails under his arms, gorgeously attired, and covered with velvet and jewelry. Mrs. Dickens was lounging upon a sofa at the farther end of the room. We were duly presented by an usher, or master of ceremonies, and, after exchanging a few words with the author of "Pickwick," retired to give place to the little Englishman who was behind us.

An unpleasant meeting.

Upon being introduced, this gentleman deferentially remarked, "I had the pleasure of meeting you, Mr. Dickens, at Mr. Lover's, in ——shire, two years ago." Dickens looked him steadily in the face for a minute, and then answered in a loud voice, "I never was there in my life!" "I beg your pardon," replied his interlocutor, overcome with confusion, "it was in the winter, and" (naming several persons) "were there at the same time." Dickens again gave him a withering look, and after a pause repeated in a still more elevated tone, "I tell you, sir, I never was there in my life!" Here Mrs. Dickens interposed, and, addressing her husband, said, "Why, Charles, you certainly were there, and I was there with you; don't you remember the occurrence?" Mr. Dickens glared at her almost fiercely, and, advancing a step or two, with his right hand raised, fairly shouted, "I *tell* you, I never was there in my

life!" . . . The unfortunate Englishman withdrew without another word, and I and my friend retired disgusted. — MAUNSELL B. FIELD ("Memories"). [1]

Self-consciousness.

A friend of Dickens, who knew him from childhood, and dearly loved him to the last, wrote to me, a few years ago, saying, "There does not live a larger-hearted or a better-minded man than Dickens. He is liberal to a fault. . . . The great fault of his character is ostentation. With all his sagacity, Dickens is eternally afraid of being *slighted*. He never seems to be at ease—not even in his own house. His restless eye wanders, like a comet in a cage, beating the bars of his eyelashes to escape. He has always seemed to me as if he had something *on* his mind as well as *in* it. He danced the tight-rope of display for years."—R. SHELTON MACKENZIE ("Life of Dickens").

A word from Thackeray.

Part of the talk ran on Dickens, of whom he spoke in a somewhat different strain from what he used in public. Our host had introduced the subject by saying, after some censure of that popular novelist's extravagancies, "But I like Dickens personally: he is so genial and frank." "Genial, yes," was the reply; "but frank"—and a twinkle came from over the spectacles — "well, frank as an oyster." — ANON. (*Lippincott's Magazine*, January, 1871).

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[1] Field (Maunsell B.). Memories of many Men and of some Women. 12mo. New York: Harper & Bros. 1874.

A too great confidence in himself, a sense that every thing was possible to the will that would make it so, laid occasionally upon him self-imposed burdens greater than might be borne by any one with safety. In that direction there was in him, at such times, something even hard and aggressive ; in his determinations a something that had almost the tone of fierceness ; something in his nature that made his resolves insuperable, however hasty the opinions on which they had been formed. So rare were these manifestations, however, and so little did they prejudice a character as entirely open and generous as it was at all times ardent and impetuous, that only very infrequently, towards the close of the middle term of a friendship which lasted without the interruption of a day for more than three-and-thirty years, were they ever unfavorably presented to me. —JOHN FORSTER ("Life of Dickens").

Self-will.

Suspense of any kind was at all times intolerable. . . . The interval between the accomplishment of any thing, and "its first motion," Dickens never could endure, and he was too ready to make any sacrifice to abridge or end it. This did not belong to the strong side of his character, and advantage was frequently taken of the fact.—JOHN FORSTER ("Life of Dickens").

Impatience of delay.

At several periods of Dickens's life he was driven hither and thither by a morbid restlessness. Forster gives numerous instances of this, and says, "There was for him no 'city of the mind' against outward ills, for inner consolation and shelter. It was in and

Feverish restlessness.

Feverish restlessness.

from the actual he still stretched forward to find the freedom and satisfactions of an ideal, and by his very attempts to escape the world he was driven back into the thick of it. But what he would have sought there, it supplies to none, and to get the infinite of anything so finite, has broken many a stout heart." Elsewhere, Forster says, "His early sufferings brought with them the healing powers of energy, will, and persistence, and taught him the inexpressible value of a determined resolve to live down difficulties ; but the habit, in small as in great things, of renunciation and self-sacrifice, they did not teach ; and by his sudden leap into a world-wide popularity and influence, he became master of everything that might seem attainable in life, before he had mastered what a man must undergo to be equal to its hardest trials."

Conversation.

Mr. Dickens was not a conversationalist, although he told a story well, and with humorous exaggeration. He hated argument,—indeed, he would not, or could not go into it. He used to observe, "No man but a fool was ever talked *out* of his own opinion and *into* your state of mind. Arguments are only cannon-balls, fired at a sand-bank, or water poured into a sieve—a sheer waste of time and trouble. I won't argue with a man : it is going down, on all-fours, to an obstinate dog. In emphatic cases the only argument is a punch of the head. That's a stunner ! "—R. SHELTON MACKENZIE ("Life of Dickens").

To the most trivial talk he gave the attraction of

his own character. It might be a small matter,—something he had read or observed during the day, some quaint odd fancy from a book, a vivid little out-door picture, the laughing exposure of some imposture, or a burst of sheer mirthful enjoyment,—but of its kind it would be something unique, because genuinely part of himself. This, and his unwearying animal spirits, made him the most delightful of companions; no claim on good-fellowship ever found him wanting; and no one so constantly recalled to his friends the description Johnson gave of Garrick, as the cheerfulest man of his age.—JOHN FORSTER ("Life of Dickens"). *Conversation.*

It always seemed to me that he had a power of narration which was beyond anything even which his books drew forth. How he would narrate to you, sitting on a gate or on a fallen tree, some rustic story of the people he had known in his neighborhood! It was the very perfection of narrative. Not a word was thrown away, not an adjective misused.—ARTHUR HELPS (*Macmillan's Magazine*, July, 1870).

Mr. Dickens was a very good listener, paying the greatest attention to the person who was speaking (that is, if he was saying anything worth attending to), and never interrupting, except perhaps by uttering, if he approved of what was being said, the words "Surely, surely," which was a favorite expression of his.—ARTHUR HELPS (*Macmillan's Magazine*, July, 1870). *A good listener.*

Hilarity—Burlesque imitations.

When in the mood for humorous characterization, Dickens' hilarity was most amazing. To hear him tell a ghost story with a very florid imitation of a very pallid ghost, or hear him sing an old-time stage song, such as he used to enjoy in his youth at a cheap London theatre, to see him imitate a lion in a menagerie cage, or the clown in a pantomime when he flops and folds himself up like a jack-knife, or to join with him in some mirthful game of his own composing, was to become acquainted with one of the most delightful and original companions in the world.—JAMES T. FIELDS ("Yesterdays with Authors").[1]

Social traits.

Of his attractive points in society and conversation I have particularized little, because in truth they were himself. Such as they were, they were never absent from him. His acute sense of enjoyment gave such relish to his social qualities that probably no man, not a great wit or a professed talker, ever left, in leaving any social gathering, a blank so impossible to fill up. In quick and varied sympathy, in ready adaptation to every whim or humor, in help to any mirth or game, he stood for a dozen men. If one may say such a thing, he seemed to be always the more himself for being somebody else, for continually putting off his personality. His versatility made him unique. What he said once of his own love of acting, applied to him equally when at his happiest among friends he loved ; sketching a character, telling a story, acting a charade, taking part

[1] Forster states that Dickens was a capital conjurer.

in a game ; turning into comedy an incident of the day, describing the last good or bad thing he had seen, reproducing in quaint, tragical, or humorous form and figure, some part of the passionate life with which all his being overflowed. "Assumption has charms for me so delightful—I hardly know for how many wild reasons—that I feel at a loss of Oh I can't say what exquisite foolery, when I lose a chance of being some one not in the remotest degree like myself." How it was, that, from one of such boundless resource in contributing to the pleasure of his friends, there was yet, as I have said, so comparatively little to bring away, may be thus explained.—JOHN FORSTER ("Life of Dickens"). *Social traits.*

One of the pleasantest of his suggestions was a proposal to go with him on one of his reading tours. It must have been a weary business, tedious and monotonous for such a man ; yet the most delightful thing to note was that he was ever buoyant, full of spirits and animation. He never flagged. Few could conceive what a delightful and dramatic story-teller he was, calling up a situation before you by a few touches of a highly dramatic kind—the eyes twinkling and sparkling ; the cheeks, the mouth, wreathed over and over again in jocund smiles. Nor was he a mimic in the common sense, but carried away by a sort of intense expression which lighted all up. It was this which gave such a dramatic force to any story that he told. In the railway I recall his filling more than an hour with some sketches of "Old Rogers," the poet, and of his mode of telling a story. Those who attended the *Imitations.*

Imitations.

Readings will recall Justice Stareleigh : the strangely obtuse and owl-like expression, and the slow, husky croak with which the words were projected. This was borrowed from the "Poet of Memory," and many were the stories he told in his manner. The old man would relate his cut-and-dried "tales," always in the same fashion, and "go on," like a wheezy musical box, on the smallest invitation. Sometimes he would go and dine with him, and he described the scene as piteously grotesque, a faithful man-servant cheerily suggesting the old stories which they knew by heart. Thus : "Tell Mr. Dickens, sir, the story of the Hon. Charles Townshend and the beautiful Miss Curzon." The old poet would start in a slow, almost Gregorian tone, and in curious old-fashioned phrase : "The Hon—or—able Charles Townshend" (this name will serve as well as another) "became enamored of Miss Curzon. She was beeyewtiful. He beribed her maid to conceal him in her cheeamber, and when she arrived to dress for a ball, emerged from his hiding-place. She looked at him fixedly, then said : ' Why don't you begin ?' *She took him for the 'airdresser !*" This, in this place, has not much effect, but with the face that was supplied, twisted so strangely, and the mournful unchanging voice, it became a histrionic feat of high order.—PERCY FIZGERALD ("Recreations of a Literary Man").

Among his good things should not be omitted his telling of a ghost story. He had something of a hankering after them, as the readers of his briefer pieces will know ; and such was his interest gener-

ally in things supernatural that, but for the strong restraining power of his common sense, he might have fallen into the follies of spiritualism. As it was, the fanciful side of his nature stopped short at such pardonable superstitions as those of dreams, and lucky days, or other marvels of natural coincidence ; and no man was readier to apply sharp tests to a ghost story or a haunted house, though there was just so much tendency to believe in any such, "well-authenticated," as made perfect his manner of telling one.—JOHN FORSTER. ("Life of Dickens").

Ghost stories and superstitions.

In nothing was he more delightful . . . than in talking of all matters connected with the stage. He delighted in the very scent of the place, and welcomed any bits of news or gossip connected with it. It was enjoyable to watch his keen interest even in the obscurest histrionic elements.—PERCY FITZGERALD ("Recreations of a Literary Man").

Love for the stage.

Going round by Lambeth one afternoon in the early summer of 1870, . . . he abruptly asked—"What do you think would be the realization of one of my most cherished day-dreams?" Adding, instantly, without waiting for any answer, "To settle down now for the remainder of my life within easy distance of a great theatre, in the direction of which I should hold supreme authority. It should be a house, of course, having a skilled and noble company, and one in every way magnificently appointed. The pieces acted should be dealt with according to my pleasure, and touched up here and there in obedience to my own judgment ; the players

A cherished day-dream.

as well as the plays being absolutely under my command. There," said he laughingly, and in a glow at the mere fancy, "*that's* my day-dream!"

A cherished day-dream.

Dickens's delighted enjoyment, in fact, of every thing in any way connected with the theatrical profession, was second only to that shown by him in the indulgence of the master-passion of his life, his love of literature.—CHARLES KENT ("Dickens as a Reader").[1]

I had asked him . . . whether he continued to think that we should have the play;[2] and this was his reply; . . .

His account of his theatrical experience.

"ARE we to have that play? Have I spoken of it, ever since I came home from London, as a settled thing? I do not know if I have ever told you seriously, but I have often thought, that I should certainly have been as successful on the boards as I have been between them. I assure you, when I was on the stage at Montreal (not having played for years) I was as much astonished at the reality and ease, to myself, of what I did as if I had been another man. See how oddly things come about! When I was about twenty, and knew three or four successive years of Mathews's At Homes from sitting in the pit to hear them, I wrote to Bartley who was stage manager at Covent-Garden, and told him how young I was, and exactly what I thought I

[1] Kent (Charles). Dickens as a Reader. Crown 8vo. London, 1872.

[2] An amateur performance, in which Dickens and several of his literary and artistic friends were to take part. The plan was carried into effect with notable success.

could do; and that I believed I had a strong perception of character and oddity, and a natural power of reproducing in my own person what I observed in others. There must have been something in the letter that struck the authorities, for Bartley wrote to me, almost immediately to say that they were busy getting up the *Hunchback*, . . . but that they would communicate with me again, in a fortnight. Punctual to the time, another letter came: with an appointment to do any thing of Mathews's I pleased, before him and Charles Kemble, on a certain day at the theatre. . . . I was laid up, when the day came, with a terrible bad cold and an inflammation of the face, . . . I wrote to say so, and added that I would resume my application next season. I made a great splash in the gallery soon afterwards; the *Chronicle* opened to me; I had a distinction in the little world of the newspaper, which made me like it; began to write; did n't want money; had never thought of the stage, but as a means of getting it; gradually left off turning my thoughts that way; and never resumed the idea. . . .

Almost on the stage.

"This was at a time when I was at Doctor's Commons as a short-hand writer for the proctors. . . . I went to some theatre every night, with a very few exceptions, for at least three years: really studying the bills first, and going to where there was the best acting: and always to see Mathews[1] whenever he played. I practised immensely (even such things as walking in and out, and sitting down in a chair): often four, five, six hours a day. I prescribed to

[1] The elder Mathews.

myself, too, a sort of Hamiltonian system of learning parts ; and learnt a great number. I have n't even lost the habit now, . . . I must have done a good deal."—JOHN FORSTER ("Life of Dickens").

Theatrical powers.

Dickens always greatly rejoiced in the theatre ; and, having seen him act with the Amateur Company of the Guild of Literature and Art, I can well imagine the delight his impersonations in Montreal must have occasioned. I have seen him play "Sir Charles Coldstream," in the comedy of "Used Up," with such perfection that all other performers in the same part have seemed dull by comparison. Even Mathews, superb artist as he is, could not rival Dickens in the character of "Sir Charles." Once I saw Dickens, Mark Lemon, and Wilkie Collins on the stage together. The play was called "Mrs. Nightingale's Diary" (a farce in one act, the joint production of Dickens and Mark Lemon), and Dickens played six characters in the piece. Never have I seen such wonderful changes of face and form as he gave us that night. He was alternately a rattling lawyer of the Middle Temple, a boots, an eccentric pedestrian and cold-water drinker, a deaf sexton, an invalid captain, and an old woman. What fun it was, to be sure, and how we roared over the performance!—JAMES T. FIELDS ("Yesterdays with Authors").

His "Shallow."

His impersonation was perfect : the old, stiff limbs, the senile stoop of the shoulders, the head bent with age, the feeble step, with a certain attempted smartness of carriage characteristic of the conceited Justice of the Peace, were all assumed and maintained

with wonderful accuracy; while the articulation,—part lisp, part thickness of utterance, part a kind of impeded sibillation, like that of a voice that "pipes and whistles in the sound" through loss of teeth—gave consummate effect to his mode of speech. The one in which "Shallow" says, "'Tis the heart, Master Page; 'tis here, 'tis here. I have seen the time with my long sword I would have made you four tall fellows skip like rats," was delivered with a humor of expression in effete energy of action and would-be fire of spirit that marvellously imaged fourscore years in its attempt to denote vigor long since extinct.—MARY COWDEN CLARKE ("Recollections of Writers"). *His "Shallow."*

The way in which Charles Dickens impersonated that arch braggart, "Captain Bobadil," was a veritable piece of genius: from the moment when he is discovered lolling at full length on a bench in his lodging, calling for a "cup o' small beer" to cool down the remnants of excitement from last night's carouse with a set of roaring gallants, till his final boast of having "not so much as once offered to resist" the "coarse fellow" who set upon him in the open streets, he was capital. The mode in which he went to the back of the stage before he made his exit from the first scene of Act II., uttering the last word of the taunt he flings at "Downright" with a bawl of stentorian loudness—"Scavenger," and then darted off the stage at full speed; the insolent scorn of his exclamation, "This a Toledo? pish!" bending the sword into a curve as he spoke; the swaggering assumption of ease with which he leaned on the shoul- *His "Bobadil."*

His "Bobadil."

der of his interlocutor, puffing away his tobacco smoke and puffing it off as "your right Trinidado," . . . —were all the very height of fun.—MARY COWDEN CLARKE ("Recollections of Writers").

Forster's opinion of Dickens's acting.

Though Dickens had the title to be called a born comedian, the turn for it being in his very nature, his strength was rather in the vividness and variety of his assumptions, than in the completeness, finish, or ideality he could give to any part of them. It is expressed exactly by what he says of his youthful preference for the representations of the elder Mathews. At the same time this was in itself so thoroughly genuine and enjoyable, and had in it such quickness and keenness of insight, that of its kind it was unrivalled; and it enabled him to present in "Bobadil," [1] after a richly colored picture of bombastical extravagance and comic exaltation in the earlier scenes, a contrast in the later of tragical humility and abasement, that had a wonderful effect.[2] —JOHN FORSTER ("Life of Dickens").

Carlyle and Macready on his acting.

Dickens's essential faculty, I often say, is that of a first-rate play-actor. Had he been born twenty or forty years sooner, we should most probably have had a second and greater Mathews, Incledon, or the

[1] "Every Man in his Humour," by Ben Jonson. There are engraved portraits of Dickens as *Bobadil*, by C. R. Leslie and Kenny Meadows.

[2] Forster elsewhere says of Dickens's acting: "He was always greater in quickness of assumption than in steadiness of delineation."

like, and no writing Dickens.—THOMAS CARLYLE ("Reminiscences").[1]

Carlyle and Macready on his acting.

Among those I have seen, the only amateurs with any pretensions to theatrical talent were Charles Dickens, of world-wide fame, and . . . Miss MacTavish.—WILLIAM CHARLES MACREADY ("Reminiscences").[2]

Greatly as his acting contributed to the success, . . . this was nothing to the service he had ren-

[1] Carlyle (Thomas). Reminiscences. Edited by J. A. Froude. 8vo. London, 1881.

[2] Macready (William Charles). Reminiscences, and Selections from his Diaries and Letters. Edited by Sir F. Pollock. 2 vols., 8vo. London, 1875.

NOTE.—At some risk of anticlimax the editor would present his own impression (as derived from the readings) of Dickens's claims to theatrical distinction. The readings certainly proved him to be a great actor, and made it possible to estimate his standing with intelligence. His range included farce, low comedy, and melodrama; he had also an aptitude for many eccentric characters, which do not submit to strict classification. Those familiar with the acting of the late James W. Wallack, Jr., and of John S. Clarke, may gain some idea of the quality of Dickens's theatrical powers, when it is said that he possessed the distinguishing ability of both, and was a better actor than either of them. He could not, indeed, have challenged comparison with Wallack in light comedy; but in melodrama (wherein lay Wallack's chief strength) he was his superior. He had all the oddity of Clarke, without so marked a tendency to mannerism; and his low comedy had a juiciness quite beyond the reach of Clarke. He must have failed in *Benedick*, *Mercutio*, or *Prince Hal*. It would have been preposterous for him to have attempted *Othello*, *Hamlet*, or *Lear*. His own discretion saved him from rash experiments in high comedy and in tragedy; he lacked the elegance requisite for the one, the dignity and the sustained power essential to the other.

As a stage manager.

dered as manager. It would be difficult to describe it. He was the very life and soul of the entire affair. I never seemed till then to have known his business capabilities. He took everything on himself, and did the whole of it without an effort. He was stage-director, very often stage-carpenter, scene-arranger, property-man, prompter, and band-master. Without offending any one he kept every one in order. For all he had useful instructions, and the dullest of clays under his potter's hand were transformed into little bits of porcelain. He adjusted scenes, assisted carpenters, invented costumes, devised playbills, wrote out calls, and enforced as well as exhibited in his proper person every thing of which he urged the necessity on others. Such a chaos of dirt, confusion, and noise, as the little theatre was the day we entered it, and such a cosmos as he made it of cleanliness, order, and silence, before the rehearsals were over!—JOHN FORSTER ("Life of Dickens").

Unlike most professional rehearsals, where waiting about, dawdling, and losing time, seem to be the order of the day, the rehearsals under Charles Dickens's stage-managership were strictly devoted to work—serious, earnest work; the consequence was, that when the evening of performance came, the pieces went off with a smoothness and polish that belong only to finished stage-business and practised performers. He was always there among the first arrivers at rehearsals, and remained in a conspicuous position during their progress till the very last moment of conclusion. He had a small table placed rather to one side of the stage, at which he

generally sat, as the scenes went on in which he himself took no part. On this table rested a moderate-sized box; its interior divided into convenient compartments for holding papers, letters, etc., and this interior was alwas the very pink of neatness and orderly arrangement. Occasionally he would leave his seat at the managerial table, and stand with his back to the foot-lights, in the very centre of the front of the stage, and view the whole effect of the rehearsed performance as it proceeded, observing the attitudes and positions of those engaged in the dialogue, their mode of entrance, exit, etc. He never seemed to overlook anything; but to note the very slightest point that conduced to the "going well" of the whole performance. With all this supervision, however, it was pleasant to observe the utter absence of dictatorialness or arrogation of superiority that distinguished his mode of ruling his troop: he exerted his authority firmly and perpetually; but in such a manner as to make it universally felt to be for no purpose of self-assertion or self-importance; on the contrary, to be for the sole purpose of ensuring general success to their united efforts.—MARY COWDEN CLARKE ("Recollections of Writers").[1]

As a stage manager.

[1] There are some very valuable reminiscences of Dickens, as an actor and manager, in two articles by Richard Hengist Horne, entitled "Bygone Celebrities," which were contributed to the *Cornhill Magazine*, February and May, 1871. Mr. Horne was a member of Dickens's amateur company, and writes from personal knowledge. Unfortunately, these articles are too long for the present purpose.

As a reader.

In an anonymously edited volume, entitled "Speeches, Literary and Social, by Charles Dickens," there are two excellent accounts of Dickens's readings; the first, by the anonymous editor, the second, by Edmund Yates. From these a few quotations must suffice:

"One glance at the platform is sufficient to convince the audience that Mr. Dickens thoroughly appreciates 'stage effect.' A large screen of maroon cloth occupies the background; before it stands a light table of peculiar design, on the inner left-hand corner of which there peers forth a miniature desk, large enough to accommodate the reader's book. On the right hand of the table, and somewhat below its level, is a shelf, where repose a carafe of water and a tumbler. This is covered with velvet, somewhat lighter in color than the screen. No drapery conceals the table, whereby it is plain that Mr. Dickens believes in expression of figure as well as of face, and does not throw away everything but his head and arms, according to the ordinary habit of ordinary speakers. About twelve feet above the platform, and somewhat in advance of the table, is a horizontal row of gas-jets with a tin reflector; and midway in both perpendicular gas-pipes there is one powerful jet with glass chimney. By this admirable arrangement, Mr. Dickens stands against a dark background in a frame of gas-light, which throws out his face and figure to the best advantage. . . . He has action of singular ease and felicity, a remarkably expressive eye, and a mobility of the facial muscles which belongs to actors of the highest grade. . . . What Mr.

Dickens *does* is very frequently infinitely better than anything he says, or the way he says it; yet the doing is as delicate and intangible as the odour of violets, and can be no better described. Nothing of its kind can be more touchingly beautiful than the manner in which Bob Cratchit previous to proposing 'a merry Christmas to us all, my dears, God bless us'—stoops down, with tears in his eyes, and places Tiny Tim's withered little hand in his 'as if he loved the child, and wished to keep him by his side, and dreaded that he might be taken from him.' It is pantomime worthy of the finest actor."

As a reader.

Mr. Yates is quoted as follows, in the volume of Dickens's speeches:

"Although the characters in his previous readings had each a distinct and defined individuality—and in true artistic spirit the comparatively insignificant characters have as much finish bestowed upon their representation as the heroes and heroines, *e.g.*, the fat man on 'Change who replies 'God knows,' to the query as to whom Scrooge had left his money—a bit of perfect Dutch painting—one could not help feeling that the personation was but a half-personation given under restraint; that the reader was 'underacting,' as it is professionally termed, and one longed to see him give his dramatic genius full vent. That wish has now been realised. When Mr. Dickens called round him some half-hundred of his friends and acquaintances on whose discrimination and knowledge of public audiences he had reliance, and when, after requesting their frank verdict on the experiment, he commenced the new reading, 'Sikes and Nancy,' until, gradually warming with

The "Oliver Twist" reading.

The "Oliver Twist" reading.

excitement, he flung aside his book and acted the scene of the murder, shrieked the terrified pleadings of the girl, growled the brutal savagery of the murderer, brought looks, tones, gestures simultaneously into play to illustrate his meaning, there was no one not even of those who had known him best, or who believed in him most, but was astonished at the power and the versatility of his genius.

"Grandest of all the characters stands out Fagin the Jew. The voice is husky and with a slight lisp, but there is no nasal intonation; a bent back, but no shoulder shrug; the conventional attributes are omitted, the conventional words are never spoken; and the Jew fence, crafty and cunning even in his bitter vengeance, is there before us, to the life. . . .

Reading of the "murder" scene.

"It is here,[1] of course, that the excitement of the audience is wrought to its highest pitch, and that the acme of the actor's art is reached. The raised hands, the bent-back head, are good; but shut your eyes, and the illusion is more complete. Then the cries for mercy, the 'Bill! dear Bill! for dear God's sake!' uttered in tones in which the agony of fear prevails even over the earnestness of the prayer, the dead, dull voice as hope departs, are intensely real. When the pleading ceases, you open your eyes in relief, in time to see the impersonation of the murderer seizing a heavy club, and striking his victim to the ground.

"Artistically speaking, the story of Sikes and Nancy ends at the point here indicated. Through-

[1] In the "murder scene."

out the entire scene of the murder, from the entrance of Sikes into the house until the catastrophe, the silence was intense—the old phrase 'a pin might have been heard to drop,' could have been legitimately employed. It was a great study to watch the faces of the people—eager, excited, intent—permitted for once in a life-time to be natural, forgetting to be British, and cynical, and unimpassioned. The great strength of this feeling did not last into the concluding five minutes. The people were earnest and attentive ; but the wild excitement so seldom seen amongst us died as Nancy died, and the rest was somewhat of an anti-climax.

Reading of the "murder" scene.

"No one who appreciates good acting should miss this scene. It will be a treat such as they have not had for a long time, such as, from all appearances, they are not likely to have soon again. To them the earnestness and force, the subtlety, the *nuances*, the delicate lights and shades of the great dramatic art, will be exhibited by one of the first—if not the first—of its living masters ; while those of far less intellectual calibre will understand the vigour of the entire performance, and be specially amused at the facial and vocal dexterity by which the crafty Fagin is instantaneously changed into the chuckle-headed Noah Claypole."

When I first entered on this interpretation of myself (then quite strange to the public ear) I was sustained by the hope that I could drop into some hearts, some new expression of the meaning of my books, that would touch them in a new way. To this hour that purpose is so strong in me, and so real

His own interest in his readings.

His own interest in his readings.

are my fictions to myself, that, after hundreds of nights, I come with a feeling of freshness to that little red table, and laugh and cry with my hearers, as if I had never stood there before.—CHARLES DICKENS (letter of 1867).[1]

As a public speaker.

Every body has heard of Mr. Dickens's pre-eminence as an actor, but perhaps it is not generally known what an admirable speaker he was. The last speech, I believe, that he ever made was at the Academy dinner; and I think it would be admitted by every one . . . that Mr. Dickens's was the speech of the evening. He was herein greatly aided by nature, having that presence conveying the idea of courage and honesty, which gives much effect to public speaking, and also possessing a sweet, deep-toned, audible voice, that had exceeding pathos in it. Moreover, he had most expressive hands—not beautiful, according to the ordinary notions of beauty, but nervous and powerful hands. He did not indulge in gesticulation; but the slight movement of these expressive hands helped wonderfully in giving additional force and meaning to what he said.—ARTHUR HELPS (*Macmillan's Magazine*, July, 1870).

Ability as a reporter.

"There never *was* such a short-hand writer," has often been said to me by Mr. Beard, the friend he first made in that line. . . . Mr. James Grant, a writer who was himself in the gallery [2] with Dickens, . . . states that among its eighty or ninety

[1] Dickens (Charles). Letters. Edited by his Sister-in-law and his Eldest Daughter. 2 vols. London, 1879.

[2] The gallery of the House of Commons.

reporters he occupied the very highest rank, not merely for accuracy in reporting but for marvellous quickness in transcribing.—JOHN FORSTER ("Life of Dickens"). *Ability as a reporter.*

His editorship of *Household Words* and *All the Year Round* . . . was distinguished above all by liberality; and a scrupulous consideration and delicacy, evinced by him to all his contributors, was part of the esteem in which he held literature itself. It was said in a newspaper after his death, evidently by one of his contributors, that he always brought the best out of a man by encouragement and appreciation; that he liked his writers to feel unfettered. . . . Yet the strong feeling of personal responsibility was always present in his conduct of both journals; and varied as the contents of a number might be, and widely apart the writers, a certain individuality of his own was never absent. He took immense pains . . . with numbers in which he had written nothing; would often accept a paper from a young or unhandy contributor, because of some single notion in it which he thought it worth rewriting for; and in this way, or by helping generally to give strength and attractiveness to the work of others, he grudged no trouble.—JOHN FORSTER ("Life of Dickens"). *As an editor.*

It is in his relations with writers in his periodical, and, indeed, in all connections with his "literary brethren" as he modestly called them, that this amiable and engaging man appears to the most extraordinary advantage. As I read over many of his

As an editor.

letters . . . I am amazed at the good-natured allowance, the untiring good humor, the wish to please and make pleasant, the almost deference, the modesty in one of his great position. . . . There was ever the same uniform good nature and ardor, the eagerness to welcome and second any plan, a reluctance to dismiss it, and this done with apologies; all, too, in the strangest contrast to the summary and plain-spoken fashion of the ordinary editor.—PERCY FITZGERALD ("Recreations of a Literary Man").

The letters of Dickens strongly confirm the statements of Forster and Fitzgerald, as to his kindness and helpfulness. They show that he gave careful help to many writers, at a large expense of thought and time; not only in the way of exposing errors in the compositions submitted to him, but also by positive, constructive criticism. He suggested remedies and improvements, often at great length.

The man for an emergency.

Under every difficulty, and in every emergency, his was the encouraging influence, the bright and ready help. In illness, whether of the children or any of the servants, he was better than a doctor. He was so full of resource, for which every one eagerly turned to him, that his mere presence in the sick-room was a healing influence, as if nothing could fail if he were only there.—JOHN FORSTER ("Life of Dickens").

He was one of the most precise and accurate men in the world; and he grudged no labor in his work.

. . . His love of order and neatness was almost painful. Unpunctuality made him unhappy. . . . He was of a commanding and organizing nature—a good man of business—frank, clear, decisive, imperative—a man to confide in, and look up to, as a leader, in the midst of any great peril. —ARTHUR HELPS (*Macmillan's Magazine*, July, 1870).

Practical efficiency.

He was an early riser, if for no other reason, because every man in whose work imagination plays its part must sometimes be alone ; and Dickens has told us that there was to him something incomparably solemn in the still solitude of the morning. But it was only exceptionally, and when hard-pressed by the necessities of his literary labors, that he wrote before breakfast ; in general he was contented with the ordinary working hours of the morning, not often writing after luncheon, and, except in early life, never in the evening. Ordinarily, when engaged on a work of fiction, he considered three of his not very large MS., pages a good, and four an excellent, day's work ; and, while very careful in making his corrections clear and unmistakeable, he never rewrote what a morning's labor had ultimately produced. On the other hand, he was frequently slow in beginning a story, being, as he himself says, affected by something like despondency at such times, or, as he elsewhere humorously puts it, "going round and round the idea, as you see a bird in his cage go about and about his sugar before he touches it."—A. W. WARD ("Dickens").[1]

Methods of work.

[1] Ward (Adolphus William). Dickens. 12mo. (English Men of Letters. Edited by J. Morley). London and New York, 1882.

Hand-writing.

There were many little *Household Words* traditions. The "chief" himself always wrote with blue ink on blue paper. His was a singularly neat and regular hand, really artistic in its conception, legible—yet not very legible to those unfamiliar with it.—PERCY FITZGERALD ("Recreations of a Literary Man").

Life at home.

Of the course of his daily life in the country there is not much to be said. Perhaps there was never a man who changed places so much and habits so little. He was always methodical and regular; and passed his life from day to day, divided for the most part between working and walking, the same wherever he was. When such friends as Longfellow . . . came, . . . he would compress into infinitely few days an enormous amount of sight-seeing and country enjoyment. . . . Except on such particular occasions, however, and not always even then, his mornings were reserved wholly to himself; and he would generally preface his morning work (such was his love of order in every thing around him) by seeing that all was in its place in the several rooms, visiting also the dogs, stables, and kitchen garden, and closing, unless the weather was very bad indeed, with a turn or two round the meadow before settling to his desk.—JOHN FORSTER ("Life of Dickens").[1]

Every day we had out-of-door games, such as

[1] There are many pleasant details in regard to Dickens's dogs, and his fondness for them, in Percy Fitzgerald's "Recreations of a Literary Man," vol. i., chapter 4.

"Bowls," "Aunt Sally," and the like, Dickens leading off with great spirit and fun. Billiards came after dinner, and during the evening we had charades and dancing. There was no end to the new divertisements our kind host was in the habit of proposing, so that constant cheerfulness reigned at Gad's Hill. He went into his work-room, as he called it, soon after breakfast, and wrote till twelve o'clock; then he came out, ready for a long walk. The country about Gad's Hill is admirably adapted for pedestrian exercise, and we went forth every day, rain or shine, for a stretcher. Twelve, fifteen, even twenty miles were not too much for Dickens, and many a long tramp we have had over the hop-country together. Chatham, Rochester, Cobham Park, Maidstone—anywhere, out under the open sky and in the free air! Then Dickens was at his best, and talked. Swinging his blackthorn stick, his lithe figure sprang forward over the ground, and it took a practised pair of legs to keep alongside of his voice.—JAMES T. FIELDS ("Yesterdays with Authors").

Life at Gad's Hill.

No man was so inclined naturally to derive his happiness from home concerns. . . . Not to speak of changes of importance, there was not an additional hook put up wherever he inhabited, without his knowledge, or otherwise than as part of some small ingenuity of his own. Nothing was too minute for his personal superintendence. Whatever might be in hand, theatricals for the little children, entertainments for those of larger growth, cricket matches, dinners, field sports, . . . he was the

Constant activity in all home affairs.

centre and soul of it. He did not care to take measure of its greater or less importance. It was enough that a thing was to do, to be worth his while to do it as if there was nothing else to be done in the world.—JOHN FORSTER ("Life of Dickens").

Constant activity in all home affairs.

Sometimes he held little festivals in a field attached to the house—a recent purchase, of which he was rather proud, and which he humorously styled "his estate." I recall a cricket match here —"the Higham Eleven" against some other competitors—which drew an attendance of villagers and others. He treated it with a grave solemnity that was amusing, and enjoyed the proceedings heartily. There was the "umpire's marquee" pitched, chairs arranged, flags flying. We even got up a sort of eager enthusiasm. Our host himself officiated as marker. I see him in his white jean coat, and his gray hat set a little on one side, his double glasses on, going conscientiously through his work; scoring down "byes," and "overs," and runs; at times cheering some indifferent "hit" with an encouraging "Well run! well run!" This he kept up the whole day.—PERCY FITZGERALD ("Recreations of a Literary Man").

Festivals at Gad's Hill.

October 22, 1853.—At a dinner-party at Mr. Holland's last evening, a gentleman, in instance of Charles Dickens's unweariability, said that during some theatrical performances in Liverpool he acted in play and farce, spent the rest of the night in making speeches, feasting, and drinking at table, and ended at seven o'clock in the morning by jump-

A busy night.

ing leap-frog over the backs of the whole company. —NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE ("English Note-books").

It was his mission to make people happy. Words of good cheer were native to his lips, and he was always doing what he could to lighten the lot of all who came into his beautiful presence. His talk was simple, natural, and direct, never dropping into circumlocution nor elocution. Now that he is gone, whoever has known him intimately for any considerable period of time will linger over his tender regard for, and his engaging manner with children; his cheery "Good Day" to poor people he happened to be passing in the road; his trustful and earnest "Please God," when he was promising himself any special pleasure, like rejoining an old friend or returning again to scenes he loved. At such times his voice had an irresistible pathos in it, and his smile diffused a sensation like music.—JAMES T. FIELDS ("Yesterdays with Authors"). *Geniality and cheeriness.*

No man more embodied the expression "genial" than himself; no man could better make "a party of pleasure" truly pleasant and worthy of its name than he. There was a positive sparkle and atmosphere of holiday sunshine about him: he seemed to radiate brightness and enjoyment from his own centre that cast lustre upon all around him.—MARY COWDEN CLARKE ("Recollections of Writers").

Charles Dickens—beaming in look, alert in manner, radiant with good humor, genial-voiced, gay, the very soul of enjoyment, fun, good taste and good spirits, admirable in organizing details and suggest- *Geniality.*

ing novelty of entertainment,—was of all beings the very man for a holiday season.—MARY COWDEN CLARKE (" Recollections of Writers ").

Temperate in food and drink.

Although he was accustomed to talk and write a great deal about eating and drinking, I have rarely seen a man eat and drink less. He used to dilate in imagination over the brewing of a bowl of punch, but I always noticed that when the punch was ready, he drank less of it than any one who might be present. It was the sentiment of the thing and not the thing itself that engaged his attention. He liked to have a little supper every night after a reading, and have three or four friends round the table with him, but he only pecked at the viands as a bird might do, and I scarcely saw him eat a hearty meal during his whole stay in the country.—JAMES T. FIELDS (" Yesterdays with Authors ").

A supper at "the office."

Somewhere about ten o'clock at night we were all at the rooms of "the office ;"[1] . . . when, according to his hospitable thought, we must have a short, hurried, but satisfactory supper before going down to "Gad's," some time about eleven o'clock. "Just a morsel," he said ; which took the shape of a noble tongue from Fortnum's and a lobster salad, and a bottle of the "sparkling." He himself used to invest such delicacies with an extra flavor and sparkle. A few phrases from him, and you thought of wassail and the feasting at Dingley Dell : though

[1] The office of *All the Year Round*. Upon this occasion Dickens and some of his friends had returned from a jaunt into Hertfordshire.

apart from this, everything he set down or ordered was really choice, and marked by his own good taste and judgment. . . . And yet no one was more really moderate in such matters; his performance did not correspond to his anticipatory *gusto*. He liked talking in a cosy way of such things.—PERCY FITZGERALD ("Recreations of a Literary Man").

A supper at "the office."

A man of his great reputation and position might have chosen what company he pleased, and would have been welcome in the highest circles; but he never was so happy as with one or two intimate friends who understood him.—PERCY FITZGERALD ("Recreations of a Literary Man").

Choice of company.

I suppose so remarkable an author as Dickens hardly ever lived who carried so little of authorship into ordinary social intercourse. Potent as the sway of his writings was over him, it expressed itself in other ways. Traces or triumphs of literary labor, displays of conversational or other personal predominance, were no part of the influence he exerted over friends. To them he was only the pleasantest of companions, with whom they forgot that he had ever written any thing, and felt only the charm which a nature of such capacity for supreme enjoyment causes every one around it to enjoy. His talk was unaffected and natural, never bookish in the smallest degree. He was quite up to the average of well read men, but as there was no ostentation of it in his writing, so neither was there in his conversation.—JOHN FORSTER ("Life of Dickens").

Not a bookish man.

Cure for sleeplessness.

Experimenting upon it in bed, he found to be too slow and doubtful a process for him; but he very soon defeated his enemy by the brisker treatment, of getting up directly after lying down, going out, and coming home tired at sunrise. "My last special feat was turning out of bed at two, after a hard day pedestrian and otherwise, and walking thirty miles into the country to breakfast." — JOHN FORSTER ("Life of Dickens").

Another accordion.

I have bought another accordion. The steward lent me one on the passage out, and I regaled the ladies' cabin with my performances. You can't think with what feeling I play *Home, Sweet Home*, every night, or how pleasantly sad it makes us. — CHARLES DICKENS (from a letter to Forster, written in America, 1842).

Riding and walking.

Dickens was very fond of riding in these early years, and there was no recreation he so much indulged, or with such profit to himself in the intervals of his hardest work. . . . His notion of finding rest from mental exertion in as much bodily exertion of equal severity, continued with him to the last; taking in the later years what I always thought the too great strain of as many miles in walking as he now[1] took in the saddle, and too often indulging it at night; for, though he was always passionately fond of walking, he observed as yet a moderation in it, even accepting as sufficient my seven or eight miles' companionship. — JOHN FORSTER ("Life of Dickens").

[1] About 1836.

Love of the streets.

Mr. Sala is an authority on London streets, and . . . has described himself encountering Dickens in the oddest places and most inclement weather, in Ratcliffe-highway, on Haverstock-hill, on Camberwell-green. . . . Wherever there was "matter to be heard and learned," in back streets behind Holborn, in Borough courts and passages, in city wharfs or alleys, about the poorer lodging-houses, in prisons, workhouses, police-courts, rag-shops, chandlers' shops, and all sorts of markets for the poor, he carried his keen observations and untiring study. . . . For several consecutive years I accompanied him every Christmas Eve to see the marketings for Christmas down the road from the Aldgate to Bow; and he had a surprising fondness for wandering about in poor neighborhoods on Christmas-day, past the areas of shabby genteel houses in Somers or Kentish towns, and watching the dinners preparing or coming in.—JOHN FORSTER ("Life of Dickens").

Need of the streets.

"You can hardly imagine," he wrote . . . (from Switzerland, 1846), "what infinite pains I take, or what extraordinary difficulty I find in getting on FAST. Invention, thank God, seems the easiest thing in the world. . . . But the difficulty of going at what I call a rapid pace, is prodigious. . . . I suppose this is partly the effect of two years' ease, and partly of the absence of streets and numbers of figures. I can't express how much I want these. It seems as if they supplied something to my brain, which it cannot bear, when busy, to lose. For a week or a fortnight I can write

Need of the streets.

prodigiously in a retired place, . . . and a day in London sets me up again and starts me. But the toil and labor of writing day after day, without that magic lantern, is IMMENSE!! . . . *My* figures seem disposed to stagnate without crowds about them."

Then . . . came something of a sequel to the confession before made. . . . "The absence of any accessible streets continues to worry me, now that I have so much to do, in a most singular manner. It is quite a little mental phenomenon. I should not walk in them in the day time, if they were here, I dare say: but at night I want them beyond description. I don't seem able to get rid of my spectres unless I can lose them in crowds."—JOHN FORSTER ("Life of Dickens").

Love of nature.

The love of nature was as much a passion with him in his intervals of leisure, as the craving for crowds and streets when he was busy with the creatures of his fancy.—JOHN FORSTER ("Life of Dickens").

Powers of observation.

It need hardly be said that his powers of observation were almost unrivalled. . . . Indeed, I have said to myself, when I have been with him, he sees and observes nine facts for any two that I see and observe.—ARTHUR HELPS (*Macmillan's Magazine*, July, 1870).

I emphatically direct that I be buried in an inexpensive, unostentatious, and strictly private manner; that no public announcement be made of the time or place of my burial; that at the utmost not

more than three plain mourning coaches be employed ; and that those who attend my funeral wear no scarf, cloak, black bow, long hat-band, or other such revolting absurdity.—CHARLES DICKENS (extract from his Will).

Wishes as to his burial.

From first to last, . . . politics were with Dickens a sentiment rather than a study or pursuit. With his habits of application and method, it might have taken but a very short time for him to train himself as a politician ; but this short time never actually occurred. There is, however, no reason to suppose that when, in 1841, a feeler was put out by some more or less influential persons at Reading, with regard to his willingness to be nominated for the representation of that borough, he had any reason for declining the proposal besides that which he stated in his replies. He could not afford the requisite expense ; and he was determined not to forfeit his independence through accepting Government—by which I hope he means Whig party—aid for meeting the cost of the contest. Still, in 1845, though slack of faith in the "people who govern us," he had not yet become the irreclaimable political sceptic of later days ; and without being in any way bound to the Whigs, he had that general confidence in Lord John Russell which was all they could expect from their irregular followers. . . .

Politics.

Curiously enough, not less than two proposals had reached him during this autumn [1]—one from Birmingham and the other from Edinburgh—that he should allow himself to be put forward as a can-

[1] 1868.

Politics.

didate for Parliament, but he declined to entertain either, though in at least one of the two cases the prospects of success would not have been small. His views of political and parliamentary life had not changed since he wrote to Bulwer Lytton in 1865: "Would there not seem to be something horribly rotten in the system of political life, when one stands amazed how any man, not forced into it by his position, as you are, can bear to live it?" Indeed, they had hardly changed since the days when he had come into personal contact with them as a reporter. In public and in private he had never ceased to ridicule our English system of party, and to express his contempt for the Legislature and all its works. He had, however, continued to take a lively interest in public affairs, and his letters contain not a few shrewd remarks on both home and foreign questions. Like most liberal minds of his age, he felt a warm sympathy for the cause of Italy; and the English statesman whom he appears to have most warmly admired was Lord Russell. . . . Meanwhile his radicalism gradually became of the most thoroughly independent type, though it interfered neither with his approval of the proceedings in Jamaica as an example of strong government, nor with his scorn of "the meeting of jawbones and asses" held against Governor Eyre at Manchester. The political questions, however, which really moved him deeply were those social problems to which his sympathy for the poor had always directed his attention—the Poor-law, temperance, Sunday observance, punishment and prisons, labor and strikes—A. W. WARD ("Dickens").

I cannot say what answer Dickens would have returned to an enquiry as to his creed, but the nature of his religious opinions is obvious enough. Born in the Church of England, he had so strong an aversion from what seemed to him dogmatism of any kind, that he for a time—in 1843—connected himself with a Unitarian congregation; and to Unitarian views his own probably continued during his life most nearly to approach.—A. W. WARD ("Dickens").

Religious views.

As your brothers have gone away one by one, I have written to each of them what I am now going to write to you.[1] You know that you have never been hampered with religious forms of restraint, and that with mere unmeaning forms I have no sympathy. But I most strongly and affectionately impress upon you the priceless value of the New Testament, and the study of that book as the one unfailing guide in life. Deeply respecting it, and bowing down before the character of our Saviour, as separated from the vain constructions and inventions of men, you cannot go very wrong, and will always preserve at heart a true spirit of veneration and humility. Similarly I impress upon you the habit of saying a Christian prayer every night and morning. These things have stood by me all through my life, and remember that I tried to render the New Testament intelligible to you and lovable by you when

[1] The letter from which the above is an extract, was written by Dickens to his son upon the occasion of his entering Cambridge University, in 1868.

you were a mere baby. And so God bless you.—CHARLES DICKENS (letter to his son).

Religious views.

I put a New Testament among your books for the very same reasons, and with the very same hopes, that made me write an easy account of it for you, when you were a little child. Because it is the best book that ever was, or will be, known in the world; and because it teaches you the best lessons by which any human creature, who tries to be truthful and faithful to duty, can possibly be guided. . . . I now most solemnly impress upon you the truth and beauty of the Christian religion, as it came from Christ Himself, and the impossibility of your going far wrong if you humbly but heartily respect it. . . . Never abandon the wholesome practice of saying your own private prayers, night and morning. I have never abandoned it myself, and I know the comfort of it.—CHARLES DICKENS (letter to his son).

I commit my soul to the mercy of God through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and I exhort my dear children humbly to try to guide themselves by the teaching of the New Testament, in its broad spirit, and to put no faith in any man's narrow construction of its letter here or there.—CHARLES DICKENS (extract from his Will).

Resemblance to Lord Palmerston.

He was one of those men who almost invariably speak well of others behind their backs; one of the truest friends, and very little given to reveal any injury that concerned himself alone. In that respect he often reminded me of Lord Palmerston, though

he was not equal to that statesman in supreme serenity of temper. There was, however, a considerable resemblance between these two remarkable men in several points. They had both a certain hearty bluffness of manner. There was a sea-going way about them, as of a captain on his quarter-deck. They were both tremendous walkers, and took interest in every form of labor, rustic, urban, or commercial. Then, too, they made the most and best of every thing that came before them : stood up sturdily for their own way of thinking, and valued greatly their own peculiar experiences.—ARTHUR HELPS (*Macmillan's Magazine*, July, 1870).

Resemblance to Lord Palmerston.

How well I recall the bleak winter evening in 1842 when I first saw the handsome, glowing face of the young man who was even then famous over half the globe! He came bounding into the Tremont House, fresh from the steamer that had brought him to our shores, and his cheery voice rang through the hall, as he gave a quick glance at the new scenes opening upon him in a strange land, on first arriving at a Transatlantic hotel. "Here we are!" he shouted, as the lights burst upon the merry party just entering the house, and several gentlemen came forward to greet him. Ah, how happy and buoyant he was then! Young, handsome, worshipped for his genius, belted round by such troops of friends as rarely ever man had, coming to a new country to make new conquests of fame and honor. . . . You ask me what was his appearance as he ran, or rather flew, up the steps of the hotel, and sprang into the hall. He seemed all on fire with curiosity,

Arrival in America in 1842.

Arrival in America in 1842.

and alive as I never saw mortal before. From top to toe every fibre of his body was unrestrained and alert. What vigor, what keenness, what freshness of spirit, possessed him! He laughed all over, and did not care who heard him!—JAMES T. FIELDS ("Yesterdays with Authors").

Judicial firmness.

The last time I sate with him on a business occasion was at a Council meeting of the Guild of Literature and Art. There had been an application from the wife of a literary brother. The wrecked man of letters was suffering from that which would never relax its hold upon him. But it could not be said that his misconduct had not brought on the blow. The firmness and delicacy with which Dickens sketched the case to the Council, passing wholly over the cause, to get at once to the imploring fact upon which our hearts could not be closed, left in my mind a delightful sense of his abounding goodness. He spoke of the wife, and her heroic self-abandonment to her husband, through years which would have tried beyond endurance very many wives. He begged that the utmost might be done; and at the same time he remained firmly just. What were the objects of the Fund as laid down in the rules? Did the case come strictly within the limits of our mission? Friendship, sympathy apart, was it a proper and deserving case? The points were argued with the greatest care; and all the time an acute anxiety was upon the countenance of the chairman. When at length we saw our way to afford the help desired, Dickens's face brightened, . . . and he remarked cheerily how glad he was

we had seen our way to do something.—BLANCHARD JERROLD (" Best of all Good Company ").

His praise of his contemporaries.

Mr. Dickens delighted to praise ; and there were few persons who appreciated more fully than he did the works of his contemporaries.—ARTHUR HELPS (*Macmillan's Magazine*, July, 1870).

Nothing interested him more than successes won honestly in his own field, . . . in his large and open nature there was no hiding-place for little jealousies.—JOHN FORSTER (" Life of Dickens ").

These assertions are well supported by Dickens's letters, which are full of hearty praise of contemporary authors.

Gratitude for kindness.

To myself only can it be known how small were the services of friendship that sufficed to rouse all the sensibilities of this beautiful and noble nature. Throughout our life-long intercourse it was the same. His keenness of discrimination failed him never excepting here, when it was lost in the limitless extent of his appreciation of all kindly things ; and never did he receive what was meant for a benefit that he was not eager to return it a hundred-fold. No man more truly generous ever lived.—JOHN FORSTER (" Life of Dickens ").

Certainly by no man was gratitude more persistently earned, than by Dickens, from all to whom nature or the world had been churlish or unfair. Not to those only made desolate by poverty or the temptations incident to it, but to those whom nat-

Sympathy with misfortune.

ural defects or infirmities had placed at a disadvantage with their kind, he gave his first consideration; helping them personally where he could, sympathising and sorrowing with them always, but above all applying himself to the investigation of such alleviation or cure as philosophy or science might be able to apply to their condition. This was a desire so eager as properly to be called one of the passions of his life, visible in him to the last hour of it.—JOHN FORSTER ("Life of Dickens").

Character of his helpfulness.

He helped men with a spontaneous grace and sweetness which are indescribable. The deep, rich, cheery voice; the brave and noble countenance; the hand that had the fire of friendship in its grip—all played their part in comforting in a moment the creature who had come to Charles Dickens for advice, for help, for sympathy. When he took a cause in hand, or a friend under his wing, people who knew him breathed in a placid sense of security. He had not only the cordial will to be of use wherever his services could be advantageously enlisted, but he could see at a glance the exact thing he might do; and beyond the range of his conviction as to his own power, or the limit of proper asking or advancing, no power on earth could move him the breadth of a hair.—BLANCHARD JERROLD ("Best of all Good Company").

I frankly confess that, having met innumerable men, and had dealings with innumerable men, I never met one with an approach to his genuine, unaffected, unchanging kindness, or one that ever

found so sunshiny a pleasure in doing one a kindness. I cannot call to mind that any request I ever made to him was ungranted, or left without an attempt to grant it.—PERCY FITZGERALD (" Recreations of a Literary Man ").

Character of his helpfulness.

While writing " No Name," which appeared in *All the Year Round*, Wilkie Collins was taken sick, and Dickens wrote to him as follows:

An offer of help.

" Write to me . . . at any moment, and say you are unequal to your work, and want me, and I will come to London straight, and do your work. I am quite confident that, with your notes and a few words of explanation, I could take it up at any time and do it. Absurdly unnecessary to say that it would be a makeshift! But I could do it at a pinch, so like you that no one should find out the difference. Don't make much of this offer in your mind; it is nothing, except to ease it. If you should want help I am as safe as the bank. The trouble would be nothing to me, and the triumph of overcoming the difficulty great. . . . Call me, and I come."

Collins recovered, and was able to go on with his own work in his own way. I have met with nothing which better illustrates the spirit of helpfulness in Dickens, than does this remarkable proposal.

It is almost thirty years since my acquaintance with him began; and on my side, I may say, every new meeting ripened it into more and more clear discernment of his rare and great worth as a brother man: a most cordial, sincere, clear-sighted, quietly

Carlyle's estimate.

Carlyle's estimate.

decisive, just and loving man : till at length he had grown to such a recognition with me as I have rarely had for any man of my time. . . .

No death since 1866 has fallen on me with such a stroke. No literary man's hitherto ever did. The good, the gentle, high-gifted, ever-friendly, noble Dickens,—every inch of him an Honest Man.—THOMAS CARLYLE (from two letters of 1870, quoted by Forster).

CHARLOTTE BRONTË.

1816–1855.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

AS one reads the story of Charlotte Brontë's life, a feeling of sadness overpowers all other impressions ; a feeling of regret and compassion. It is indeed a sorrowful story ; a picture in which the lights bear no proportion to the shadows. A feeble, motherless girl, growing up in the midst of a rude, uncongenial society ; oppressed by poverty ; saddened by bereavement ; grieved by the ruinous excesses of a profligate brother ; repelled by the gloom of a harsh and unsympathetic father ; disheartened by ill-requited toil, and by all the discouragements and disappointments of unsuccessful authorship—these were the hard conditions under which Charlotte Brontë grew to womanhood and developed her remarkable genius.

Almost the only alleviations to the troubles of her early life were the society of her sisters and the fancies with which her poetic spirit peopled the dull world around her. Such an experience might naturally be expected to produce a very morbid and unlovable character ; but her loneliness did not develop egotism ; and, living habitually in a world of her imagination, driven to introspection, forced to seek companionship chiefly with her own thoughts

and fancies, she was, nevertheless, one of the most unselfish of women. Earnestness, sincerity, and persistent strength of will, are her leading characteristics. When world-wide fame and brilliant success came to her, upon the publication of "Jane Eyre," she bore her good fortune with modesty and simplicity—as she had endured her trials with steadfast constancy.

Mrs. Gaskell's "Life of Charlotte Brontë" is the chief authority. Nearly everything presented in the following pages has been derived from this source. In 1877 a volume was published entitled "Charlotte Brontë, a Monograph," by T. Wemyss Reid. Mr. Reid was able to avail himself of many materials which were unattainable, or which it was impossible for Mrs. Gaskell to use, at the time when her work was written. He gives many of Miss Brontë's familiar letters to her friends, covering the whole course of her life, and showing some aspects of her character of which there is no other record. The book is a very valuable complement to the larger and more important work of Mrs. Gaskell. Much pleasant reminiscence will also be found in the autobiography of Harriet Martineau. There is an interesting article, written by a school-fellow of Miss Brontë's, in *Scribner's Magazine*, May, 1871.

LEADING EVENTS OF CHARLOTTE BRONTË'S LIFE.

1816. Born, April 21st, at Thornton, Yorkshire.
1820.—(Aged 4.) Her parents remove to Haworth.
1824.—(Aged 8.) At Cowan's Bridge School.
1825.—(Aged 9.) Death of her sisters Maria and Elizabeth. Leaves Cowan's Bridge.
1831.—(Aged 15.) At Miss Wooler's school, at Roe Head.
1832.—(Aged 16.) Leaves school, and returns to the parsonage at Haworth.
1835.—(Aged 19.) A teacher at Miss Wooler's school.
1839.—(Aged 23.) A governess.
1842.—(Aged 26.) At a school in Brussels, fitting herself to be a teacher.
1846.—(Aged 30.) Poems of Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell published.
1847.—(Aged 31.) "Jane Eyre" published.
1848.—(Aged 32.) First visit to London.
1849.—(Aged 33.) "Shirley" published.
1853.—(Aged 37.) "Villette" published.
1854.—(Aged 38.) Marries the Rev. Arthur Bell Nicholls, June 29th.
1855.—(Aged 38 years and 11 months.) Dies, March 31st.

CHARLOTTE BRONTË.

I HAVE had a curious packet confided to me, containing an immense amount of manuscript, in an inconceivably small space ; tales, dramas, poems, romances, written principally by Charlotte, in a hand which it is almost impossible to decipher without the aid of a magnifying glass.[1] . . . Among these papers there is a list of her works, which I copy, as a curious proof how early the rage for literary composition had seized upon her :—"Catalogue of my books, with the period of their completion, up to August 3d, 1830."[2] . . . As each volume contains from sixty to one hundred pages, and the size of the page lithographed is rather less

Literary precocity.

[1] In Mrs. Gaskell's volume there is a lithographic fac-simile of one of these curious pages. Exclusive of the title, which occupies a space of about five lines of the manuscript, the text of this page measures three inches and five-eighths across, and four inches and three-eighths from top to bottom. It contains seventy-eight lines, averaging sixteen words to a line ; so that the entire page contains about twelve hundred and fifty words—which would make somewhat over four pages of this volume ! The letters are beautifully formed, and only require the aid of a magnifying-glass to be entirely legible.

[2] Here follows a list of twenty-two volumes, of tales, essays, poems, etc.

Literary precocity.

than the average, the amount of the whole seems very great, if we remember that it was all written in about fifteen months. So much for the quantity; the quality strikes me as of singular merit for a girl of thirteen or fourteen.—ELIZABETH C. GASKELL ("Life of Charlotte Brontë").[1]

Early fondness for art.

I find a "list of painters whose works I wish to see," drawn up by Charlotte when she was scarcely thirteen: "Guido Reni, Julio Romano, Titian, Raphael, Michael Angelo, Correggio, Annibal Caracci, Leonardo da Vinci, Fra Bartolomeo, Carlo Cignani, Vandyke, Rubens, Bartolomeo Ramerghi." Here is this little girl, in a remote Yorkshire parsonage, who has probably never seen anything worthy the name of a painting in her life, studying the names and characteristics of the great old Italian and Flemish masters, whose works she longs to see some time, in the dim future that is before her! There is a paper remaining which contains minute studies of, and criticisms upon, the engravings in "Friendship's Offering for 1829;" showing that she had early formed those habits of close observation, and patient analysis of cause and effect, which served so well in after-life as handmaids to her genius.[2]

Mrs. Gaskell quotes as follows from a letter written to her by a schoolmate and lifelong friend of

[1] Gaskell (Elizabeth Cleghorn). Life of Charlotte Brontë. 2 vols. London, 1857. NOTE.—Most of the following extracts are from Mrs. Gaskell's work; everything not otherwise specified comes from that source.

[2] See p. 252.

Charlotte Brontë's. The time referred to was January, 1831, when Miss Brontë arrived at Miss Wooler's school at Roe Head :

Recollections of a schoolmate.

"I first saw her coming out of a covered cart, in very old-fashioned clothes, and looking very cold and miserable. . . . When she appeared in the schoolroom her dress was changed, but just as old. She looked a little old woman, so short-sighted that she always appeared to be seeking something, and moving her head from side to side to catch a sight of it. She was very shy and nervous, and spoke with a strong Irish accent. When a book was given her, she dropped her head over it till her nose nearly touched it, and when she was told to hold her head up, up went the book after it, still close to her nose, so that it was not possible to help laughing. . . .

"She would confound us by knowing things that were out of our range altogether. She was acquainted with most of the short pieces of poetry that we had to learn by heart; would tell us the authors, the poems they were taken from, and sometimes repeat a page or two, and tell us the plot. She had a habit of writing in italics (printing characters), and said she had learnt it by writing in their magazine. They brought out a 'magazine' once a month, and wished it to look as like print as possible. She told us a tale out of it. No one wrote in it, and no one read it, but herself, her brother, and two sisters. . . . In our play hours she sate, or stood still, with a book, if possible. Some of us once urged her to be on our side in a game at ball. She said she had never played, and could not play. We

School-days.

School-days.

made her try, but soon found that she could not see the ball, so we put her out. She took all our proceedings with pliable indifference, and always seemed to need a previous resolution to say 'No' to anything. She used to go and stand under the trees in the playground, and say it was pleasanter. She endeavored to explain this, pointing out the shadows, the peeps of sky, etc. We understood but little of it. . . . She always showed physical feebleness in everything. She ate no animal food at school. It was about this time I told her she was very ugly. Some years afterwards I told her I thought I had been very impertinent. She replied, 'You did me a great deal of good, Polly, so don't repent of it.'"

Personal appearance.

In 1831 she was a quiet, thoughtful girl of nearly fifteen years of age, very small of figure—"stunted" was the word she applied to herself,—but as her limbs and head were in just proportion to the slight, fragile body, no word in ever so slight a degree suggestive of deformity could properly be applied to her; with soft, thick, brown hair, and peculiar eyes, of which I find it difficult to give a description, as they appeared to me in her later life. They were large and well shaped; their color a reddish brown; but if the iris was closely examined, it appeared to be composed of a great variety of tints. The usual expression was of quiet, listening intelligence; but now and then, on some just occasion for vivid interest or wholesome indignation, a light would shine out, as if some spiritual lamp had been kindled, which glowed behind those expressive orbs. I never

saw the like in any other human creature. As for the rest of her features, they were plain, large, and ill set; but, unless you began to catalogue them, you were hardly aware of the fact, for the eyes and power of the countenance overbalanced every physical defect; the crooked mouth and the large nose were forgotten, and the whole face arrested the attention, and presently attracted all those whom she herself would have cared to attract. Her hands and feet were the smallest I ever saw; when one of the former was placed in mine, it was like the soft touch of a bird in the middle of my palm. The delicate long fingers had a peculiar fineness of sensation, which was one reason why all her handiwork, of whatever kind—writing, sewing, knitting—was so clear in its minuteness. She was remarkably neat in her whole personal attire; but she was dainty as to the fit of her shoes and gloves.

Personal appearance.

I can well imagine that the grave, serious composure, which, when I knew her, gave her face the dignity of an old Venetian portrait, was no acquisition of later years, but dated from that early age when she found herself in the position of an elder sister to motherless children. But in a girl just entered on her teens, such an expression would be called (to use a country-phrase) "old-fashioned;" and in 1831, the period of which I now write, we must think of her as a little, set, antiquated girl, very quiet in manners, and very quaint in dress.

It was during this visit at the Briery[1]—Lady Kay Shuttleworth having kindly invited me to meet her

[1] In August, 1850.

Mrs. Gaskell's first sight of Miss Brontë.

there—that I first made acquaintance with Miss Brontë. If I copy out part of a letter, which I wrote soon after this to a friend, . . . I shall probably convey my first impressions more truly and freshly than by amplifying what I then said into a longer description.

"Dark when I got to Windermere station; a drive along the level road to Low-wood; then a stoppage at a pretty house, and then a pretty drawing-room, in which were Sir James and Lady Kay Shuttleworth, and a little lady in a black-silk gown, whom I could not see at first for the dazzle in the room; she came up and shook hands with me at once. I went up to unbonnet, etc.; came down to tea; the little lady worked away and hardly spoke, but I had time for a good look at her. She is (as she calls herself) *undeveloped*, thin, and more than half a head shorter than I am; soft brown hair, not very dark; eyes (very good and expressive, looking straight and open at you) of the same color as her hair; a large mouth; the forehead square, broad, and rather overhanging. She has a very sweet voice; rather hesitates in choosing her expressions, but when chosen they seem without an effort admirable, and just befitting the occasion; there is nothing overstrained, but perfectly simple."

Conversation.

The impression Miss Brontë made upon those with whom she first became acquainted . . . in London, was of a person with clear judgment and fine sense; and though reserved, possessing unconsciously the power of drawing out others in conversation. She never expressed an opinion without as-

signing a reason for it; she never put a question without a definite purpose; and yet people felt at their ease in talking with her. All conversation with her was genuine and stimulating; and when she launched forth in praise or reprobation of books, or deeds, or works of art, her eloquence was indeed burning. She was thorough in all that she said or did; yet so open and fair in dealing with a subject, or contending with an opponent, that instead of rousing resentment she merely convinced her hearers of her earnest zeal for the truth and right. *Conversation.*

I remember . . . many little particulars which Miss Brontë gave me, in answer to my inquiries respecting her mode of composition, etc. She said, that it was not every day that she could write. Sometimes weeks or even months elapsed before she felt that she had anything to add to that portion of her story which was already written. Then, some morning she would waken up, and the progress of her tale lay clear and bright before her, in distinct vision. When this was the case, all her care was to discharge her household and filial duties, so as to obtain leisure to sit down and write out the incidents and consequent thoughts, which were, in fact, more present to her mind at such times than her actual life itself. Yet notwithstanding this "possession" (as it were), those who survive, of her daily and household companions, are clear in their testimony, that never was the claim of any duty, never was the call of another for help, neglected for an instant. *Methods of work.*

Kindness to an old servant.

It had become necessary to give Tabby [1]—now nearly eighty years of age—the assistance of a girl. Tabby relinquished any of her work with jealous reluctance, and could not bear to be reminded, though ever so delicately, that the acuteness of her senses was dulled by age. Among other things, she reserved to herself the right of peeling the potatoes for dinner; but as she was growing blind, she often left in those black specks, which we in the North call the "eyes" of the potato. Miss Brontë was too dainty a housekeeper to put up with this; yet she could not bear to hurt the faithful old servant, by bidding the younger maiden go over the potatoes again, and so reminding Tabby that her work was less effectual than formerly. Accordingly she would steal into the kitchen and quietly carry off the bowl of vegetables, without Tabby's being aware, and breaking off the full flow of interest and inspiration in her writing, carefully cut out the specks in the potatoes, and noiselessly carry them back to their place. This little proceeding may show how orderly and fully she accomplished her duties, even at those times when the "possession" was upon her.

A principle of authorship.

She was not fond of speaking of herself and her conscience; but she now and then uttered to her very few friends things which may, alas! be told now, without fear of hurting her sensitive nature, —things which ought to be told in her honor. Among these sayings was one which explains the long interval between her works. She said that she thought every serious delineation of life ought to

[1] A servant who had been long in the Brontë family.

be the product of personal experience and observation,—experience naturally occurring, and observation of a normal, and not of a forced or special kind. "I have not accumulated, since I published 'Shirley,'" she said, "what makes it needful for me to speak again; and till I do, may God give me grace to be dumb!"—HARRIET MARTINEAU ("Biographical Sketches").[1]

A principle of authorship.

The sisters retained the old habit, which was begun in their aunt's lifetime, of putting away their work at nine o'clock, and commencing their study, pacing up and down the sitting-room. At this time they talked over the stories they were engaged upon, and described their plots. Once or twice a week, each read to the others what she had written, and heard what they had to say about it. Charlotte told me that the remarks made had seldom any effect in inducing her to alter her work, so possessed was she with the feeling that she had described reality; but the readings were of great and stirring interest to all, taking them out of the gnawing pressure of daily-recurring cares, and setting them in a free place.

Conferences.

The three tales[2] had tried their fate in vain together; at length they were sent forth separately, and for many months with still continued ill-success. I have mentioned this here, because, among

How "Jane Eyre" was begun.

[1] Martineau (Harriet). Biographical Sketches. 8vo. London, 1869.

[2] "Wuthering Heights," "Agnes Grey," and "The Professor."

How "Jane Eyre" was begun.

the dispiriting circumstances connected with her anxious visit to Manchester,[1] Charlotte told me that her tale came back upon her hands, curtly rejected by some publisher, on the very day when her father was to submit to his operation. But she had the heart of Robert Bruce within her, and failure upon failure daunted her no more than him. Not only did "The Professor" return again to try his chance among the London publishers, but she began, in this time of care and depressing inquietude, —in those gray, weary, uniform streets, where all faces, save that of her kind doctor, were strange and untouched with sunlight to her,—there and then did the brave genius begin "Jane Eyre." Read what she herself says :—"Currer Bell's book found acceptance nowhere, nor any acknowledgement of merit, so that something like the chill of despair began to invade his heart." And, remember, it was not the heart of a person who, disappointed in one hope, can return with redoubled affection to the many certain blessings that remain. Think of her home, and the black shadow of remorse lying over one in it, till his very brain was mazed, and his gifts and his life were lost ;—think of her father's sight hanging on a thread ;—of her sisters' delicate health, and dependence on her care ; —and then admire, as it deserves to be admired, the steady courage which could work away at "Jane Eyre," all the time "that the one-volume tale was plodding its weary round in London."

[1] Whither she had gone to take care of her father during an operation for cataract.

I had several opportunities of perceiving how . . . nervousness was ingrained in her constitution, and how acutely she suffered in striving to overcome it. One evening we had, among other guests, two sisters who sang Scottish ballads exquisitely. Miss Brontë had been sitting quiet and constrained till they began "The Bonnie House of Airlie," but the effect of that and "Castle Yetts," which followed, was as irresistible as the playing of the Piper of Hamelin. The beautiful clear light came into her eyes; her lips quivered with emotion; she forgot herself, rose, and crossed the room to the piano, where she asked eagerly for song after song. The sisters begged her to come and see them the next morning, when they would sing as long as ever she liked; and she promised gladly and thankfully. But on reaching the house her courage failed. We walked some time up and down the street; she upbraiding herself all the while for folly, and trying to dwell on the sweet echoes in her memory, rather than on the thought of a third sister who would have to be faced if we went in. But it was of no use, and dreading lest this struggle with herself might bring on one of her trying headaches, I entered at last and made the best apology I could for her non-appearance.

Nervousness and shyness.

Much of this nervous dread of encountering strangers I ascribed to the idea of her personal ugliness, which had been strongly impressed upon her imagination early in life, and which she exaggerated to herself in a remarkable manner. "I notice," said she, "that after a stranger has once looked at my face, he is careful not to let his eyes wander to

that part of the room again!" A more untrue idea never entered into anyone's head. Two gentlemen who saw her during this visit, without knowing at the time who she was, were singularly attracted by her appearance, and this feeling of attraction toward a pleasant countenance, sweet voice, and gentle timid manners, was so strong in one as to conquer a dislike he had previously entertained to her works.

Nervousness and shyness.

In looking over the earlier portion of this correspondence, I am struck afresh by the absence of hope, which formed such a strong characteristic in Charlotte. At an age when girls in general look forward to an eternal duration of such feelings as they or their friends entertain, and can therefore see no hindrance to the fulfilment of any engagements dependent on the future state of the affections, she is surprised that "E." keeps her promise to write. In after-life, I was painfully impressed with the fact, that Miss Brontë never dared to allow herself to look forward with hope; that she had no confidence in the future; and I thought, when I heard of the sorrowful years she had passed through, that it had been this pressure of grief which had crushed all buoyancy of expectation out of her. But it appears from the letters, that it must have been, so to speak, constitutional; or, perhaps, the deep pang of losing her two elder sisters combined with a permanent state of bodily weakness in producing her hopelessness. If her trust in God had been less strong, she would have given way to unbounded anxiety, at many a period of her life.

Despondency.

. . . Even then (in 1836) there is a despond-

ency in some of her expressions, that too sadly reminds one of some of Cowper's letters. And it is remarkable how deeply his poems impressed her. His words, his verses, came more frequently to her memory, I imagine, than those of any other poet. "Mary" says: "Cowper's poem, 'The Castaway,' was known to them all, and they all at times appreciated, or almost appropriated it. Charlotte told me once that Branwell[1] had done so, and though his depression was the result of his faults, it was in no other respect different from hers. Both were not mental but physical illnesses. She was well aware of this, and would ask how that mended matters, as the feeling was there all the same, and was not removed by knowing the cause. She had a larger religious toleration than a person would have who had never questioned, and the manner of recommending religion was always that of offering comfort, not fiercely enforcing a duty." *Despondency.*

She said that none but those who had been in the position of a governess could ever realize the dark side of "respectable" human nature; under no great temptation to crime, but daily giving way to selfishness and ill-temper, till its conduct towards those dependent on it sometimes amounts to a tyranny of which one would rather be the victim than the inflictor. . . . Among several things . . . which I well remember, she told me what had once occurred to herself. She had been entrusted with the care of a little boy, three or four years old, during the absence of his parents on a day's excursion, and *The life of a governess.*

[1] Her brother.

The life of a governess.

particularly enjoined to keep him out of the stable-yard. His elder brother, a lad of eight or nine, and not a pupil of Miss Brontë's, tempted the little fellow into the forbidden place. She followed, and tried to induce him to come away ; but, instigated by his brother, he began throwing stones at her, and one of them hit her so severe a blow on the temple that the lads were alarmed into obedience. The next day, in full family conclave, the mother asked Miss Brontë what occasioned the mark on her forehead. She simply replied, "An accident, ma'am," and no further inquiry was made ; but the children (both brothers and sisters) had been present, and honored her for not "telling tales." From that time, she began to obtain influence over all ; and as she insensibly gained their affection, her own interest in them was increasing. But one day, at the children's dinner, the small truant of the stable-yard, in a little demonstrative gush, said, putting his hand in hers, "I love 'ou, Miss Brontë." Whereupon, the mother exclaimed, before all the children, "Love the *governess*, my dear!"

Drawing.

It is singular how strong a yearning the whole family had towards the art of drawing. Mr. Brontë had been very solicitous to get them good instruction ; the girls themselves loved everything connected with it—all descriptions or engravings of great pictures ; and, in default of good ones, they would take and analyze any print or drawing which came in their way, and find out how much thought had gone to its composition, what ideas it was intended to suggest, and what it *did* suggest. In the same

spirit, they labored to design imaginations of their own; they lacked the power of execution, not of conception. At one time, Charlotte had the notion of making her living as an artist, and wearied her eyes with drawing with pre-Raphaelite minuteness, but not with pre-Raphaelite accuracy, for she drew from fancy rather than from nature. *Drawing.*

One of her schoolmates, quoted by Mrs. Gaskell, says, in writing of her at school in 1831, "She used to draw much better and more quickly, than anything we had seen before, and knew much about celebrated pictures and painters. Whenever an opportunity offered of examining a picture or cut of any kind, she went over it piecemeal, with her eyes close to the paper, looking so long that we used to ask her 'what she saw in it.' She could always see plenty, and explained it very well. She made poetry and drawing at least interesting to me. . . . Her idea of self-improvement ruled her even at school. It was to cultivate her taste. She always said there was enough of hard practicality, and *useful* knowledge forced upon us by necessity, and that the thing most needed was to soften and refine our minds. She picked up every scrap of information concerning painting, sculpture, poetry, music, etc., as if it were gold." *Love of art.*

I asked her whether she had ever taken opium, as the description of its effect in "Villette" was so exactly like what I had experienced,—vivid and exaggerated presence of objects, of which the outlines *Imaginative power.*

were indistinct or lost in golden mist, etc. She replied, that she had never, to her knowledge, taken a grain of it in any shape, but that she had followed the process which she always adopted when she had to describe anything which had not fallen within her own experience ; she had thought intently on it for many and many a night before falling to sleep —wondering what it was like, or how it would be— till at length, sometimes after the progress of her story had been arrested at this one point for weeks, she wakened up in the morning with all clear before her, as if she had in reality gone through the experience, and then could describe it word for word, as it had happened.

Imaginative power.

Charlotte was more than commonly tender in her treatment of all dumb creatures, and they, with that fine instinct so often noticed, were invariably attracted towards her. The deep and exaggerated consciousness of her personal defects—the constitutional absence of hope, which made her slow to trust in human affection, and, consequently, slow to respond to any manifestation of it—made her manner shy and constrained to men and women, and even to children. We have seen something of this trembling distrust of her own capability of inspiring affection, in the grateful surprise she expresses at the regret felt by her Belgian pupils at her departure. But not merely were her actions kind, her words and tones were ever gentle and caressing, towards animals ; and she quickly noticed the least want of care or tenderness on the part of others towards any poor brute creature.

Treatment of animals.

"I know," she wrote (January 21st, 1853) "that you will give me your thoughts upon my book,—as frankly as if you spoke to some near relative whose good you preferred to her gratification. I wince under the pain of condemnation—like any other weak structure of flesh and blood; but I love, I honor, I kneel to Truth. Let her smite me on one cheek—good! the tears may spring to the eyes; but courage! There is the other side—hit again—right sharply!" This was the genuine spirit of the woman. She might be weak for once; but her permanent temper was one of humility, candor, integrity and conscientiousness. She was not only unspoiled by her sudden and prodigious fame, but obviously unspoilable.—HARRIET MARTINEAU ("Autobiography").

Conscientiousness.

I remember the trembling little frame, the little hand, the great honest eyes. An impetuous honesty seemed to me to characterize the woman. Twice I recollect she took me to task for what she held to be errors in doctrine. Once about Fielding we had a disputation. She spoke her mind out. She jumped too rapidly at conclusions. . . . She formed conclusions that might be wrong, and built up whole theories of character upon them. New to the London world, she entered it with an independent, indomitable spirit of her own; and judged of contemporaries, and especially spied out arrogance or affectation, with extraordinary keenness of vision. She was angry with her favorites if their conduct or conversation fell below her ideal. Often she seemed to me to bejudging the London folk prem-

Thackeray's estimate.

Thackeray's estimate.

aturely: but perhaps the city is rather angry at being judged. I fancied an austere little Joan of Arc marching in upon us, and rebuking our easy lives, our easy morals. She gave me the impression of being a very pure, and lofty, and high-minded person. A great and holy reverence of right and truth seemed to be with her always. Such, in our brief interview, she appeared to me.—WILLIAM M. THACKERAY ("Roundabout Papers").

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY.

1811–1863.

He was a cynic! By his life all wrought
Of generous acts, mild words, and gentle ways;
His heart wide open to all kindly thought,
His hand so quick to give, his tongue to praise!

He was a cynic! You might read it writ
In that broad brow, crowned with its silver hair;
In those blue eyes, with childlike candour lit,
In that sweet smile his lips were wont to wear!

He was a cynic! By the love that clung
About him from his children, friends, and kin;
By the sharp pain light pen and gossip tongue
Wrought in him, chafing the soft heart within!

SHIRLEY BROOKS.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

THACKERAY has been represented as a man devoid of all genial sympathies; lacking the ability to recognize pure motives or heroic actions; a railer at virtue; a misanthrope, who exulted over the degradation of his fellows, and was never so happy as when he was showing his contempt and hatred for men. That view of him was quite common at one time; perhaps it is still accepted by some persons. It was not the result of any personal knowledge of the man himself, but was wholly derived from a superficial perusal of his works. It was, for the most part, the creation of sentimentalists, who were shocked by the remarkable candor with which he told unpleasant truths, and who showed their resentment by painting a monstrous picture, which had not even the merit of being a good caricature.

When a cynic writes biography, he may reasonably be expected to show his true nature. Here we should look confidently for the expression of his arrogance and malignity. Thackeray's books are full of references to the great men of other days. Let us examine a few of his comments, and see what spirit they manifest.

He says of Addison: "When he turns to Heaven, a Sabbath comes over that man's mind: and his face lights up from it with a glory of thanks and prayer. His sense of religion stirs through his whole being. In the fields, in the town: looking at the birds in the trees: at the children in the streets: in the morning or in the moonlight: over his books in his own room: in a happy party at a country merry-making or a town assembly, good-will and peace to God's creatures, and love and awe of Him who made them, fill his pure heart and shine from his kind face." Of Steele: "Peace be with him! Let us think gently of one who was so gentle: let us speak kindly of one whose own breast exuberated with human kindness." Of Goldsmith: "Think of him reckless, thriftless, vain if you like—but merciful, gentle, generous, full of love and pity. He passes out of our life, and goes to render his account beyond it. Think of the poor pensioners weeping at his grave; think of the noble spirits that admired and deplored him; think of the righteous pen that wrote his epitaph—and of the wonderful and unanimous response of affection with which the world has paid back the love he gave it. His humor delighting us still: his song fresh and beautiful as when first he charmed with it: his words in all our mouths: his very weaknesses beloved and familiar—his benevolent spirit seems still to smile upon us: to do gentle kindnesses: to succor with sweet charity: to soothe, caress, forgive: to plead with the fortunate for the unhappy and the poor." One more quotation must suffice—"I should like to have been Shakespeare's shoeblack—just to have

lived in his house, just to have worshipped him—to have run on his errands, and seen that sweet serene face."

Were his poisoned arrows reserved for victims whose sufferings he could enjoy? In what spirit did he speak of his contemporaries? It would be easy to give many examples of his kindly judgment of the men of his own time. Some of them will be found, scattered through the present series of volumes. He is quick to recognize every shade of moral beauty. To every form of goodness he does willing homage. The lash of his sarcasm is reserved for meanness, cruelty, hypocrisy.

This, it may be said, was his art, and gives no certain indication of his real character; but how about his personal intercourse with men? What have his associates to say? Was he harsh, contemptuous, overbearing, among those with whom he lived? The records left by those who knew him intimately, and watched the daily course of his life, show nothing of the kind. They give no accounts of arrogance, assumption, cold contempt for mankind; they tell rather of a womanly sensibility, easily moved by every tale of sorrow; of a practical kindness, seeking opportunities to give pleasure; of a broad generosity, freely "distributing to the necessity of saints"—and nowise unmindful of the need of sinners. They show him to us in the midst of laughing friends, singing songs, cracking jokes, while he bore the burden of a domestic calamity worse than death. This subtle, cold anatomist of human nature employs his ingenuity in putting gold pieces into a pill-box, upon which he writes, "One

to be taken occasionally," and this he leaves, "with Dr. Thackeray's compliments," at the door of a friend sorely needing the prescription. Why does the hard-hearted man of the world go so often to St. Paul's? It is to see the rosy-cheeked, bright-eyed Charity-school children, and to hear them sing their hymns. The distrustful cynic one day meets a friendly poet in the streets of London. The cynic's face is sad; he draws his friend aside into a neighboring tavern, and there, with faltering voice and tearful eyes, he reads to him the death of Colonel Newcome.

Thackeray was pre-eminently a gentleman—in no superficial or conventional sense, but in the intrinsic meaning of the word. It may well be doubted if such a description as that which concludes the "Four Georges" could have been conceived by one who did not himself possess the character which he described. Those eloquent words may be applied to their author, without awakening any sense of incongruity or exaggeration; and in them we have a portrait of Thackeray painted by himself: "What is it to be a gentleman? Is it to have lofty aims, to lead a pure life, to keep your honor virgin; to have the esteem of your fellow-citizens and the love of your fireside; to bear good fortune meekly; to suffer evil with constancy; and through evil and good to maintain truth always? Show me the happy man whose life exhibits these qualities, and him we will salute as gentleman, whatever his rank may be."

Mr. Trollope's volume in the "English Men of Letters" series—chiefly a literary review—is the

nearest approach yet made to a biography of Thackeray. Soon after his death an excellent sketch of him, entitled "A Brief Memoir of the late Mr. Thackeray," by James Hannay, was published in Edinburgh (1864). It is a matter for regret that Mr. Hannay's work is so brief. Several fragmentary and unauthoritative memoirs have been issued; but these will not repay attention. The following works will be found useful:—George Hodder's "Memories of My Time;" Charles Mackay's "Forty Years' Recollections;" Dr. John Brown's "Spare Hours;" James T. Fields's "Yesterdays with Authors;" William B. Reed's "Haud Immemor;" Blanchard Jerrold's "Best of all Good Company;" an anonymous article in *Lippincott's Magazine*, January, 1871; an article by Bayard Taylor, in the *Atlantic Monthly*, March, 1864; an article by John Esten Cooke, in *Appletons' Journal*, September, 1879; and a highly interesting paper, signed "J. F. B.," and entitled, "A Memorial of Thackeray's School-days," in the *Cornhill Magazine*, January, 1865.

LEADING EVENTS OF THACKERAY'S LIFE.

1811.	Born, July 18th, in Calcutta.
1817.—(Aged 6.)	Brought to England.
1822.—(Aged 11.)	A scholar at the Charter-House School.
1829.—(Aged 18.)	Enters Cambridge University. Contributes his first literary work to *The Snob*, a university newspaper.
1830.—(Aged 19.)	Leaves Cambridge, and goes abroad. An art student in Paris.

1832.—(Aged 21.) Publishes "Elizabeth Brownrigge," in *Fraser's Magazine.*[1]

1833.—(Aged 22.) Contributes to the *National Standard.*

1837.—(Aged 26.) Marries Miss Isabella Shawe. Publishes the "Yellowplush Correspondence" in *Fraser's Magazine.*

1839.—(Aged 28.) Publishes the first chapters of "Catherine," in *Fraser's Magazine.*

1840.—(Aged 29.) Publishes "The Paris Sketch-book." Publishes "A Shabby Genteel Story," in *Fraser's Magazine.*

1841.—(Aged 30.) Publishes "The History of Samuel Titmarsh and the Great Hoggarty Diamond," in *Fraser's Magazine.*

1843.—(Aged 32.) Publishes "The Irish Sketch-book." Publishes "The Ravenswing," in *Fraser's Magazine.*

1844.—(Aged 33.) Travels in the East. Publishes "The Luck of Barry Lyndon," in *Fraser's Magazine.* Contributes to *Punch.*

1846.—(Aged 35.) Publishes "The Snobs of England," in *Punch.*

1847.—(Aged 36.) Publishes the first numbers of "Vanity Fair."

1848.—(Aged 37.) Finishes "Vanity Fair." Publishes the first numbers of "Pendennis."

1850.—(Aged 39.) Finishes "Pendennis."

1851.—(Aged 40.) Delivers lectures upon the English humorists, in London.

1852.—(Aged 41.) Publishes "The History of Henry Esmond."

1853.—(Aged 42.) Visits the United States, and delivers lectures upon the English humorists. Returns to England. Publishes the first numbers of "The Newcomes."

1855.—(Aged 44.) Finishes "The Newcomes." Revisits the United States, and lectures upon the Four Georges. Publishes "The Rose and the Ring."

[1] It may not be absolutely certain that Thackeray wrote this story; but the internal evidence that he did so is very strong.

1856.—(Aged 45.) Returns to England.

1857.—(Aged 46.) Publishes the first numbers of "The Virginians." Defeated as a candidate for Parliament.

1859.—(Aged 48.) Finishes "The Virginians."

1860.—(Aged 49.) Edits the *Cornhill Magazine*. Publishes "Lovell the Widower," and "The Four Georges," in the *Cornhill Magazine*.

1861.—(Aged 50.) } Publishes "The Adventures of Philip," in
1862.—(Aged 51.) } the *Cornhill Magazine*.

1863.—(Aged 52 years and 5 months.) Begins to compose "Denis Duval." Dies, December 24th.

W. M. Thackeray

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY.

HE was brought a child from India, and was sent early to the Charter House. Of his life and doings there his friend and school-fellow George Venables writes to me as follows : *Boyhood.*

"My recollection of him, though fresh enough, does not furnish much material for biography. He came to school young—a pretty, gentle, and rather timid boy. I think his experience was not generally pleasant. Though he had afterwards a scholar-like knowledge of Latin, he did not attain distinction in the school ; and I should think that the character of the head-master, Dr. Russell, . . . was uncongenial to his own. With the boys who knew him, Thackeray was popular ; but he had no skill in games, and, I think, no taste for them. . . . He was already known by his faculty of making verses, chiefly parodies. I only remember one line of one parody on a poem of L. E. L.'s, about 'Violets, dark blue violets ;' Thackeray's version was 'Cabbages, bright green cabbages,' and we thought it very witty."—ANTHONY TROLLOPE ("English Men of Letters").[1]

[1] Trollope (Anthony). Thackeray. 12mo. (English Men of Letters. Edited by J. Morley.) London and New York, 1879.

Thackeray at the Charter-House School—Reminiscences of a schoolmate.

It was when he was between the ages of thirteen and fifteen and a half or sixteen that I knew Thackeray best. He was then a rosy-faced boy with dark curling hair, and a quick, intelligent eye, ever twinkling with humor, and *good* humor. He was stout and broad-set, and gave no promise of the stature which he afterwards reached. It was during a short but severe illness, just before he left school, that he grew rapidly, leaving his sick-bed certainly a good many inches taller than he was when he entered it, and heading at once nearly all his contemporaries. . . .

School days: Dislikes games and mathematics—Jovial though sedentary.

For the usual schoolboy sports and games Thackeray had no taste or passion whatever, any more than in after-life for those field-sports which seem to have been the delight of his school-fellow and fellow-humorist, Leech. Such amusements would have come probably next to Euclid and algebra in his list of dislikes. But he was by no means what a good many men of genius are said to have been in their youth—disposed to isolation or solitary musing. For a non-playing boy he was wonderfully social, full of vivacity and enjoyment of life. His happy *insouciance* was constant. Never was any lad at once so jovial, so healthy, and so sedentary. Good spirits and merriment seemed to enable him to dispense with the glow of cricket or foot-ball; and if in his earlier days he ever "fagged out," it must have been most bitterly against his will. We were now and then, indeed, out together in small fishing parties, but it was for the talking, and the change, and the green fields, and the tea abroad instead of at home —cakes, etc., accompanying (for he was always

rather gustative, never greedy) — that Thackeray liked these expeditions. . . .

School days: Acts in "Bombastes Furioso."

I have just now lying on the table beside me, in Thackeray's handwriting of some forty years ago, —his writing was always beautiful,—a little programme of *Bombastes Furioso*, enacted by himself and some three or four of his schoolfellows, in which he took the part of "Fusbos," and to the best of my recollection did it very well. . . . This was almost the only common amusement in which I ever knew him to join, *con amore*. He had a passion for theatricals, of course kept under restraint at school, but now and then gratified when he visited friends in London, on the half-holidays. There was also a little speaking club in which he would sometimes take part merely out of good nature, for he hated speaking then, and I do not believe he liked it much better afterwards. . . .

Scholarship.

Thackeray had nearly all the materials that usually go to the making of a first-rate classical scholar. He had wonderful memory, an absolute faculty of imitation, which might have been employed in following the great classic models of verse and prose; he had the power of acquiring language; and, it is needless to say, an intense admiration of the beautiful. He got to love his Horace, and was, no doubt, *actually* a better scholar than many of our first-rate writers of English; but he was not, and never pretended to be, a high classical scholar. . . . He had no school industry. . . . Probably, too, as a younger boy he had been ill-grounded, and so lost confidence when he came to cope with those who had been better initi-

ated, and gave up the race in which he thought he might fail, for he had plenty of pride and ambition. . . . No one could in those early days have believed that there was much work in him, or that he would ever get to the top of any tree by hard climbing. Thackeray, then, experienced the usual amount of nausea, and perhaps of difficulty, in making verses and translations, and was, at fourteen, more thankful, perhaps, than most boys are for a helping hand. I see now, on the back of one of his drawings, on the same sheet with a portion of an old exercise, this acknowledgment in intentional doggerel—

School days: Scholarship.

> These verses were written by William Ewbank,
> And him for his kindness I very much thank.

His exercise was, indeed, constantly left to the very last moment, whilst he was busy with a burlesque sketch of its subject, or deeply engaged in a volume of Shakspeare, Scott, or Southey, from whom he took his real lessons, not from Chapman or Churton. . . .

Leech, at Charterhouse, was too much his junior to cope with him, and so he was *facile princeps* in drawing of an amusing kind: indeed very much of his time was taken up with it. . . . From Homer, from Horace, from Scott's poems, from Cooper's novels, from any author he happened to have in hand, he found subject for fantastic and humorous illustrations; whilst we looked on, wondering at the quickness of his brain and fingers.

School days: Caricatures—Musical—Diffident—Parodies.

Thackeray was decidedly musical as a boy, and had a capital ear; but just as he disliked formal speaking, so it was his nature to shrink from the

small amount of personal display involved in singing a song—*i.e.*, after the age of self-consciousness. In short, he was highly nervous in all such matters, and could never, I think, in his earlier years, be made anything of as a small "show-child of genius." . . .

School days: Musical—Diffident—Parodies.

A kindred accomplishment to that of caricaturing was his art of parody, afterwards brought to a climax in his imitations of eminent novelists. This, however, he practised rarely, comparatively speaking. . . .

He was, as may easily be believed, our great humorist, and touched most of our weak points good-naturedly and without offence. Nothing in character escaped him. As minor, but not insignificant notes of character, it may be added that Thackeray always dressed plainly but well, and had no turn to foppery. To those who had the charge of him he was kindly, gentlemanlike, and reasonable. . . . Partly by kind temper, and also by an acute sense of the ridiculous in conduct, he was saved from a good many of the absurdities which, in big boys, amuse or annoy, as the case may be.

He was not, I think, in those days an inventor of stories; certainly I never knew him try his hand at a plot; this power was gained afterwards, and gradually, as must be very evident to those who have followed his works in their series. He was an omnivorous reader, that is, of good English books; a trashy volume he would have thrown down in five minutes. His taste selected good books, and so his style was in a continual state of formation on good models. Memoirs, moralists like Addison

School days: An omnivorous reader of good books.

and Goldsmith, and fiction and poetry from the best hands, were his favorites; but in those days he never worked in earnest at anything serious in the way of composition, or put his power to the stretch in any way. . . .

School days: An omnivorous reader of good books.

He was eminently good-tempered to all, especially the younger boys, and nothing of a tyrant or bully. Instead of a blow or a threat, I can just hear him saying to one of them, "Hooky" (a sobriquet of a son of the late Bishop Carr, of Bombay), "go up and fetch me a volume of *Ivanhoe* out of my drawer, that's a good fellow; in the same drawer you will, perhaps, find a penny, which you may take for yourself." The penny was, indeed, rather problematical, but still realized sufficiently often to produce excitement in the mind of the youth thus addressed, and to make the service a willing one. When disappointed, it was more than probable that the victim would call Thackeray a "great snob" for misleading him, a title for which the only vengeance would be a humorous and benignant smile. In the two or three years that I am recording, I scarcely ever saw Thackeray seriously angry, or even his brow wrinkled with a frown. He has been called a cynic; it is doubtful whether a real cynic could ever be manufactured out of a boy who had such powers as he had of sarcasm, and who used them so little unkindly.—J. F. B. ("A Memorial of Thackeray's School-days," *Cornhill Magazine*, January 1, 1865).

School days: Kindliness and good-humor.

A tall, ruddy, simple-looking Englishman, who cordially held out his hand, and met me with a

friendly smile. There was nothing like a scowl on the face, and it was neither thin, bilious, nor ill-natured, but plump, rubicund, and indicative of an excellent digestion. . . . In person he was a large man—his height I think was above six feet.[1] His eyes were mild in expression, his hair nearly gray, his dress plain and unpretending. Every thing about the individual produced the impression that pretence was hateful to him. His face and figure indicated a decided fondness for roast beef, canvas-back ducks—of which he spoke in terms of enthusiasm,—plum-pudding, "Bordeaux"—of which he told me he drank a bottle daily at his dinner—and all the material good things of life.—JOHN ESTEN COOKE (*Appleton's Journal*, September, 1879).

Personal appearance.

The misshaped nose, so broad at the bridge and stubby at the end, was the effect of an early accident. . . . In his gestures—especially in the act of bowing to a lady—there was a certain awkwardness, made more conspicuous by his tall, well-proportioned, and really commanding figure. His hair, at forty was already gray, but abundant and massy; the cheeks had a ruddy tinge and there was no sallowness in the complexion; the eyes, keen and kindly even when they wore a sarcastic expression, twinkled sometimes through and sometimes over the spectacles. What I should call the predominant expression of the countenance was courage—a readiness to face the world on its own terms, without either bawling or whining, asking

[1] Anthony Trollope states that Thackeray's height was six feet and four inches.

no favors, yielding, if at all, from magnanimity.—ANON. (*Lippincott's Magazine*, January, 1871).

Manner and conversation.

His voice was neither curt nor ungracious, but courteous and cordial—the voice of a gentleman receiving a friend under his own roof. . . . He was quiet in his manner, and spoke slowly and deliberately in a low tone—apparently uttering his thought as it rose to his lips without selecting his words. After spending ten minutes with him, it was easy to see that he was a man of the world in the best sense of the phrase, and neither a bitter Juvenal nor a shy literary man, living only in books. . . . As to the general tone of his conversation, what impressed me most forcibly was his entire unreserve, and the genuine *bonhomie* of his air—a *bonhomie* which struck me as being anything but what his critic, Mr. Yates, called it—"forced." The man seemed wholly simple and natural. . . . He smiled easily, and evidently enjoyed the humorous side of things, but in private, as in delivering his lectures on Swift and some others, there was an undertone of sadness in his voice.—JOHN ESTEN COOKE (*Appleton's Journal*, September, 1879).

During his stay in Boston (1853), . . . as well as on his second visit, I saw a good deal of him, both in company and *tête-à-tête*. In his general manner he gave one the impression of having a very large amount of vitality, without that excess which makes some people restless and others boisterous. I never heard him laugh heartily or talk vehemently, nor do I believe that breeding or a

deep experience of life had so much to do with this as natural temperament. But neither was there any appearance of ennui, though a lassitude—the effect of ill-health, from which, though you would never have suspected it, he was seldom free—came over him at times, especially in the small hours.—ANON. (*Lippincott's Magazine*, January, 1871).

Manner and conversation.

His manner was at first reserved, earnest and quiet; rather a disappointment, perhaps, to those who may have expected some external manifestation of his supposed humoristic proclivities; what was most observable seemed to be that he was himself carefully observing, and desirous of not being drawn out, at least not prematurely.—MAJOR D—— (quoted in W. J. Fitzpatrick's "Life of Charles Lever").[1]

Thackeray was a man of no great power of conversation. I doubt whether he ever shone in what is called general society. He was not a man to be valuable at a dinner-table as a good talker. It was when there were but two or three together that he was happy himself and made others happy; and then it would rather be from some special piece of drollery that the joy of the moment would come, than from the discussion of ordinary topics. After so many years his old friends remember the fag-ends of the doggerel lines which used to drop from him without any effort on all occasions of jollity. And though he could be very sad—laden with melan-

Conversation.

[1] Fitzpatrick (W. J.). Life of Charles Lever. 2 vols., 8vo. London, 1879.

Conversation.

cholly, as I think must have been the case with him always—the feeling of fun would quickly come to him, and the queer rhymes would be poured out as plentifully as the sketches were made.—ANTHONY TROLLOPE ("English Men of Letters").

I do not think he struck me as being what is technically called a *conversationist*—that is, one who would be invited to dinner for the purpose of keeping up the round of talk—and there was not the least shadow of attempt to show himself off; and though what he said was always sensible and to the point, it was the language of a well-bred and accomplished gentleman, who assumed no sort of superiority, but seemed naturally and simply at his ease with his companions of the moment.—GEORGE LUNT (*Harper's Magazine*, January, 1877).

Though he said witty things, now and then, he was not a wit, in the sense in which Jerrold was, and he complained, sometimes, that his best things occurred to him after the occasion had gone by! He shone most,—as in his books,—in little subtle remarks on life, and little descriptive sketches suggested by the talk. We remember in particular, one evening, after a dinner party at his house, a fancy picture he drew of Shakespeare during his last years at Stratford, sitting out in the summer afternoon watching the people, which all who heard it, brief as it was, thought equal to the best things in his Lectures. But it was not for this sort of talent,—rarely exerted by him,—that people admired his conversation. They admired, above all, the

broad sagacity, sharp insight, large and tolerant liberality, which marked him as one who was a sage as well as a story-teller, and whose stories were valuable because he was a sage.—JAMES HANNAY ("Memoir of Thackeray").[1]

Conversation.

In private, this great satirist, whose aspect in a crowd was often one of austere politeness and reserve, unbent into a familiar *naïveté* which somehow one seldom finds in the demonstratively genial. And this was the more charming and precious that it rested on a basis of severe and profound reflection, before the glance of which all that was dark and serious in man's life and prospects lay open. The gravity of that white head, with its noble brow, and thoughtful face full of feeling and meaning, enhanced the piquancy of his playfulness, and of the little personal revelations which came with such a grace from the depths of his kindly nature.—JAMES HANNAY ("Memoir of Thackeray").

Social traits.

It is well known to those who saw much of Thackeray in his familiar moments that he could be essentially "jolly" (a favorite term of his) when the humor suited him, and that he would, on such occasions, open his heart as freely as if the word "reticence" formed no part of his vocabulary; whereas, at other times, he would keep himself entirely within himself, and answer a question by a monosyllable, or peradventure by a significant movement of the

[1] Hannay (James). A Brief Memoir of the Late Mr. Thackeray. (Reprinted from the Edinburgh Courant.) 18mo. Edinburgh, 1864.

Social traits.

head. At one moment he would look you full in the face and greet you jauntily ; at another he would turn from you with a peculiar waving of the hand, which of course indicated that he had no desire to talk.—GEORGE HODDER ("Memories of My Time").

A particular engagement—Hospitality.

I first saw Thackeray at the house of my brother-in-law, with whom I was then staying in Gloucester Place ; they had lived together as young men at Weimar, but had never seen one another since, and their meeting was very interesting. Their lines in life had been different, but the recollection of old times drew them together closely. A curious and characteristic thing happened on the occasion in question. There were a dozen people or so at dinner, all unknown to Thackeray, but he was in good spirits and made himself very agreeable. It disappointed me excessively, when, immediately after dinner, he informed me that he had a most particular engagement and was about to wish good night to his host. 'But will you not even smoke a cigar first?' I inquired. 'A cigar? Oh, they smoke here, do they? Well, to tell you the truth, that *was* my engagement,' and he remained for some hours. There was an ancient gentlemen at table who had greatly distinguished himself half a century ago at college, by whom the novelist was much attracted, and especially when he told him that there was nothing really original in modern literature ; everything, he said, came indirectly more or less from—I think he said—Pindar.

'But at all events Pindar did not write "Vanity Fair,"' I said.

'Yes, sir,' answered the old gentleman confidently, 'he did. In the highest and noblest sense Pindar did write it.'

A particular engagement—hospitality.

This view of affairs, which was quite new to him, delighted Thackeray, who was so pleased with his evening that he invited the whole company—fourteen in all—to dine with him the next day. I mention the circumstance not only as being a humorous thing in itself, but as illustrative of a certain boyish and impulsive strain that there was in his nature. He told me afterwards that when he subsequently went to the club that night he had felt so dangerously hospitable that it was all he could do to prevent himself 'asking some more people;' and as a matter of fact he did ask two other guests. He had been very moderate as to wine-drinking, and was only carried away by a spirit of geniality, which now and then overmastered him. The guests who had so much taken his fancy—or perhaps it was only the ancient Classic, whom he could not well have invited without the others—were of course delighted with their invitation, but many of them had scruples about accepting it. They called the next afternoon, in pairs, to know 'what we were going to do about it,' and 'whether we thought Mr. Thackeray had really meant it.' For my part I said I should go if I went alone; and go we did. An excellent dinner we got, notwithstanding the shortness of the notice; nor in our kind hostess's manner could be detected the least surprise at what must nevertheless have seemed a somewhat unlooked-for incursion.—James Payn (*Cornhill Magazine*, July, 1884).

Impromptu rhyming.

When I first made his acquaintance, Mr. Thackeray was known among his friends as the best improvisatore of his time, far superior to Mr. Charles Sloman, once well known in the musical world. . . . Mr. Thackeray's powers of impromptu rhyming were great and brilliant, and in congenial society he was never loth to exert them. On one occasion, when every one in the room was smoking but myself, and he had learned from my own lips that I never smoked, and that I detested tobacco, he singled me out for the exercise of his wit, and poured out a string of verses on the Pleasures of Smoking, ending each stanza with the lines, which include a common mispronunciation of my name :—

"And alas, for poor Mackay,
Who can't smoke his baccy!"

No more of the composition remains in my memory, but it did not exhaust his powers for the evening, as he ran over the whole company—I think there were seven or eight of us—and hit off the peculiarities of each with much pungency, but without a taint of ill-nature.—CHARLES MACKAY ("Forty Years' Recollections").

A full life.

Few lives were more engrossed than his, discharging, as he did, at once the duties of a man of letters and a man of fashion. He dined out a great deal during the season. He went to the theatres. He belonged to three clubs— . . . to say nothing of minor associations for the promotion of good fellowship.—JAMES HANNAY ("Memoir of Thackeray").

Thackeray's playfulness was a marked peculiarity; a great deal of the time he seemed like a schoolboy just released from his task. In the midst of the most serious topic under discussion he was fond of asking permission to sing a comic song, or he would beg to be allowed to enliven the occasion by the instant introduction of a double-shuffle. Barry Cornwall told me that when he and Charles Lamb were once making up a dinner party together, Charles asked him not to invite a certain lugubrious friend of theirs. "Because," said Lamb, "he would cast a damper even over a funeral." I have often contrasted the habitual qualities of that gloomy friend of theirs with the astonishing spirits of both Thackeray and Dickens. They always seemed to me to be standing in the sunshine, and to be constantly warning other people out of cloudland. During Thackeray's first visit to America his jollity knew no bounds, and it became necessary often to repress him when he was walking in the street. I well remember his uproarious shouting and dancing when he was told that the tickets to his first course of readings were all sold, and when we rode together from his hotel to the lecture-hall he insisted on thrusting both his long legs out of the carriage window, in deference, as he said, to his magnanimous ticket-holders.—JAMES T. FIELDS ("Yesterdays with Authors").[1]

Playfulness.

Thackeray criticised the French theatre very sharply, and came out with a strong bit of humor-

[1] Fields (James Thomas). Yesterdays with Authors. 12mo. Boston: James R. Osgood & Co. 1872.

Personates a French dancer.

ous representation, which convulsed us with laughter. It had reference to some drama or opera, I forget what, in which the principal male character comes on the stage with a pirouette, and waving his hand in a majestic manner to a chorus, representing Jews in exile at Babylon, says, "Chantez nous une chanson de Jérusalem." Thackeray rose from his seat and did the thing, pirouette and all, most inimitably: by the way, he was fond of exhibiting his French pronunciation, also of caricaturing very cleverly that of his own countrymen, the English.—MAJOR D—— (Quoted in W. J. Fitzpatrick's "Life of Charles Lever").

Bored by a prosy discourse.

During his second visit to Boston I was asked to invite him to attend an evening meeting of a scientific club, which was to be held at the house of a distinguished member. I was very reluctant to ask him to be present, for I knew he could be easily bored, and I was fearful that a prosy essay or geological speech might ensue, and I knew he would be exasperated with me, even although I were the *innocent* cause of his affliction. My worst fears were realized. We had hardly got seated, before a dull, bilious-looking old gentleman rose, and applied his auger with such pertinacity that we were all bored nearly to distraction. I dared not look at Thackeray, but I felt that his eye was upon me. My distress may be imagined when he got up quite deliberately from the prominent place where a chair had been set for him, and made his exit very noiselessly into a small ante-room leading into the larger room, and in which no one was sitting. The small apart-

ment was dimly lighted, but he knew that I knew *he* was there. Then commenced a series of pantomimic feats impossible to describe adequately. He threw an imaginary person (myself, of course) upon the floor, and proceeded to stab him several times with a paper folder, which he caught up for the purpose. After disposing of his victim in this way, he was not satisfied, for the dull lecture still went on in the other room, and he fired an imaginary revolver several times at an imaginary head. Still, the droning speaker proceeded with his frozen subject (it was something about the Arctic regions, if I remember rightly), and now began the greatest pantomimic scene of all, namely, murder by poison, after the manner in which the player King is disposed of in Hamlet. Thackeray had found a small phial on the mantel-shelf, and out of that he proceeded to pour the imaginary "juice of cursed hebenon" into the imaginary porches of somebody's ears. The whole thing was inimitably done, and I hoped nobody saw it but myself; but years afterwards, a ponderous, fat-witted young man put the question squarely to me: "What *was* the matter with Mr. Thackeray, that night the club met at Mr. ——'s house?"—JAMES T. FIELDS ("Yesterdays with Authors").

A dramatic revenge.

He was no cynic, but he was a satirist, and could now and then be a satirist in conversation, hitting very hard when he did hit. When he was in America, he met at dinner a literary gentleman of high character, middle-aged, and most dignified deportment. The gentleman was one whose character and acquirements stood high—deservedly so—but

Putting his foot upon a foible.

Putting his foot upon a foible.

who, in society, had that air of wrapping his toga around him, which adds, or is supposed to add, many cubits to a man's height. But he had a broken nose.[1] At dinner he talked much of the tender passion, and did so in a manner which stirred up Thackeray's feeling of the ridiculous. "What has the world come to," said Thackerary, out loud to the table, "when two broken-nosed old fogies like you and me sit talking about love to each other?" The gentleman was astounded, and could only sit wrapping his toga in silent dismay for the rest of the evening. Thackeray then, as at other similar times, had no idea of giving pain, but when he saw a foible he put his foot upon it, and tried to stamp it out.—ANTHONY TROLLOPE ("English Men of Letters").

Prodigality of fun.

In inquiring about him from those who survive him, and knew him well in those days,[2] I always hear the same account. "If I could only tell you the impromptu lines which fell from him." "If I had only kept the drawings from his pen, which used to be chucked about as though they were worth nothing!" "If I could only remember the drolleries!" Had they been kept there might now be many volumes of these sketches. . . . Though he so rarely talked, as good talkers do, and was averse to sit down to work, there were always falling from his mouth and pen those little pearls. —ANTHONY TROLLOPE ("English Men of Letters").

A member of "the Garrick," who was specially unpopular with the majority of the members, was

[1] And so too had Thackeray.

[2] About 1838.

literally *drawn* out of the club by Thackerary. His figure, being very peculiar, was sketched in pen and ink by his implacable persecutor. On every pad on the writing-tables, or whatever paper he could venture to appropriate, he represented him in the most ridiculous and derogatory situation that could be imagined, always with his back towards you; but unmistakeable. His victim, it must be admitted, bore this desecration of his "lively effigies" with great equanimity for a considerable period; but at length, one very strong—perhaps too strong—example of the artist's graphic and satirical abilities, combined with the conviction that he was generally objectionable, induced him to retire from the club.—J. R. PLANCHÉ ("Recollections and Reflections").

Caricature as a weapon.

Douglas Jerrold and Gilbert A' Beckett were his neighbors at those feasts,[1] and none appreciated more keenly than Thackeray the magical quickness and sparkle of the wit's repartees, or the ever-ready, shrewd, and kindly talk of the humorist. Others who were of the happy party, and who read these lines, will silently testify to their truth, and add that for each and all who sat with Thackeray at that board there was always the quaint greeting that dignified the friend with some American military title, the instant and intensely compact gratulation upon any public success or private good fortune, the eagerness to give information; the electric readiness to catch the knavish speech that sleeps in the foolish

At the Punch dinners.

[1] The weekly dinners of the contributors to *Punch*.

At the Punch dinners.

ear but never had a wink in Thackeray's; the kindly retort that seemed meant but to show you that you had spoken well; and then, better than all word-pleasantry, there were the ever-beaming kindness, the lofty moral, the lowly charity, and the noble heart that was so true to the noble brain.—SHIRLEY BROOKS (*Illustrated London News*, January 9, 1864).

Hearty frankness.

On the evening of which I speak I[1] sat beside him some time. . . . A variety of topics, chiefly literary, were discussed. His own manner soon made it impossible, even for one who in every sense looked up to him, to be otherwise than familiar in tone. No one was more thoroughly high-bred, but no one more averse to formality, and there was consequently no fencing required before one could feel at ease with him. His expressions at times were tolerably blunt. Speaking of Carlyle, he said, "Why don't he hang up his d——d old fiddle?" adding, however, in reference to the "Life of Sterling," then recently published, "Yes, a wonderful writer! What could *you or I* (!) have made of such a subject?" He went on to praise Carlyle's dignity of character: "*He* would not go round making a show of himself, as I am doing." "But he *has* lectured." "He did it once, and was done with it."—ANON. (*Lippincott's Magazine*, January, 1871).

The man and the books were equally real and true; and it was natural that he should speak without hesitation of his books, if you wished it; though

[1] In 1853, when Thackeray was lecturing in this country.

His talk about his own work.

as a man of the world and a polished gentleman who knew the world thoroughly, literature to him only took its turn among other topics. . . . Thackeray was not bookish, and yet turned readily to the subject of books if invited.—JAMES HANNAY ("Memoir of Thackeray").

"That is a touch of genius!"

When we congratulated him, many years ago, on the touch in *Vanity Fair* in which Becky "*admires*" her husband when he is giving Lord Steyne the chastisement which ruins *her* for life, "Well," he said,—"when I wrote that sentence, I slapped my fist on the table, and said, '*that* is a touch of genius!'" The incident is a trifle, but it will reveal, we suspect, an element of fervor, as well as a heartiness of frankness in recording the fervor, both equally at variance with the vulgar conception of him. This frankness and *bonhomie* made him delightful in a *tête-à-tête*, and gave a pleasant human flavor to talk full of sense, and wisdom, and experience, and lighted up by the gaiety of the true London man of the world. —JAMES HANNAY ("Memoir of Thackeray").

"Becky Sharp" and Bohemians.

He inquired in a very friendly manner what I had written. I informed him, and he said:

"Well, if I were you I would go on writing—some day you will write a book which will make your fortune. Becky Sharp made mine. I married early, and wrote for bread; and 'Vanity Fair' was my first successful work. I like Becky in that book. Sometimes I think I have myself some of her tastes. I like what are called Bohemians, and fellows of that sort. I have seen all sorts of society

—dukes and duchesses, lords and ladies, authors and actors and painters—and taken altogether, I think I like painters the best, and 'Bohemians' generally. They are more natural and unconventional; they wear their hair on their shoulders if they wish, and dress picturesquely and carelessly. You see how I made *Becky* prefer them, and that sort of life, to all the fine society she moved in. Perhaps you remember where she comes down in the world, toward the end of the book, and associates with people of all sorts, Bohemians and the rest, in their garrets."

"Becky Sharp" and Bohemians.

"I remember very well."

"I like that part of the book. I think that part is well done."

"As you speak of Becky Sharp, Mr. Thackeray," I said, "there is one mystery about her which I should like to have cleared up."

"Did Becky kill him, Mr. Thackeray?"

"What is that?"

"Nearly at the end of the book there is a picture of Jo Sedley in his night-dress, seated—a sick old man—in his chamber; and behind the curtain is Becky, glaring and ghastly, grasping a dagger."

"I remember."

"Beneath the picture is the single word 'Clytemnestra.'"

"Yes."

"Did Becky kill him, Mr. Thackeray?"

This question seemed to afford the person to whom it was addressed, material for profound reflection. He smoked meditatively, appeared to be engaged in endeavoring to arrive at the solution of some problem, and then with a secretive expression

—and a "slow smile" dawning on his face—replied: "I don't know!"—JOHN ESTEN COOKE (*Appleton's Journal*, September, 1879).

Literary modesty.

I found him one morning in an unusually loquacious mood, and I had not been with him many minutes before he said he was not disposed to trouble himself with any work that day. He was more inclined to talk. Adverting by a natural transition from the subject he had first touched upon to the respective merits of various writers who were then daily before the world, he spoke of the great success of "Household Words," and of the ability displayed in its pages by some of its contributors. "There's one man," for instance, he emphatically exclaimed, "who is a very clever fellow, and that is Sala. That paper of his 'The Key of the Street,' is one of the best things I ever read. I couldn't have written it. I wish I could."—GEORGE HODDER ("Memories of my Time").

Industry—Methods of work.

No man ever more decidedly refuted the silly notion which disassociates genius from labor. His industry must have been unremitting, for he worked slowly, rarely retouching, writing always with great thought and habitual correctness of expression. His writing would of itself show this; always neat and plain; capable of great beauty and minuteness. He used to say that if all trades failed, he would earn sixpences by writing the Lord's Prayer and the Creed (not the Athanasian) in the size of one. He considered and practised caligraphy as one of the fine arts, as did Porson and Dr. Thomas Young. He

Industry—Methods of work.

was continually catching new ideas from passing things, and seems frequently to have carried his work in his pocket, and when a thought, or a turn, or a word struck him, it was at once recorded. In the fulness of his experience, he was well pleased when he wrote six pages of *Esmond* in a day; and he always worked in the day, not at night.—Dr. John Brown ("Spare Hours").[1]

Methods of work.

With the last chapter of *Denis Duval* was published . . . a set of notes on the book, taken for the most part from Thackeray's own papers, and showing how much collateral work he had given to the fabrication of his novel. . . . He was a man who did very much of such work, delighting to deal in little historical instances. . . . But I doubt whether on that account he should be called a laborious man. He could go down to Winchelsea when writing about the little town, to see in which way the streets lay, and to provide himself with what we call local coloring. He could jot down the suggestions, as they came to his mind, of his future story. There was an irregularity in such work which was to his taste. . . . But he could not bring himself to sit at his desk and do an allotted task day by day. He accomplished what must be considered as quite a sufficient life's work. He had

[1] Brown (John). Spare Hours. Second Series. 12mo. Boston, 1866.—Dr. Brown says of the article upon Thackeray, quoted above, that a large part of it was written by Henry H. Lancaster. It does not appear in the Edinburgh edition of Dr. Brown's essays.

about twenty-five years for the purpose, and that which he has left is ample produce for the time. Nevertheless he was a man of fits and starts, who not having been in his early years drilled to method, never achieved it in his career.—ANTHONY TROLLOPE ("English Men of Letters"). *Methods of work.*

Having no business to engage me one morning, I went to call on him at his hotel, and found him in his private parlor, lolling in an easy-chair, and smoking. . . . He had evidently nothing to occupy him, and seemed ready for a friendly talk. Smoking was the first topic, and he said:

"I am fond of my cigar, you see. I always begin writing with one in my mouth."

"After breakfast, I suppose? I mean that you probably write in the forenoon?"

"Yes, the morning is my time for composing. I can't write at night. I find it excites me so that I cannot sleep."

"May I ask if you ever dictate your books to an amanuensis?" I said. "I ask this question, Mr. Thackeray, because our friend Mr. G. P. R. James says that the power to dictate is born with people. If it is not a natural gift, he says it cannot be acquired."

"I don't know," Mr. Thackeray replied. "I have dictated a good deal. The whole of 'Esmond' was dictated to an amanuensis."

"I should not have supposed so—the style is so terse that I should have fancied you *wrote* it. . . . I always particularly liked the chapter where Esmond returns to Lady Castlewood, 'bring-

ing his sheaves with him,' as she says. . . . You dictated this chapter?"

"Yes—the whole work. I also dictated all of 'Pendennis.'" — JOHN ESTEN COOKE (*Appleton's Journal*, September, 1879).

Work with an amanuensis.

He was sometimes in doubt and difficulty as to whether he should commence operations[1] sitting, or standing, or walking about, or lying down. Often he would light a cigar, and, after pacing the room for a few minutes, would put the unsmoked remnant on the mantel-piece, and resume his work with increased cheerfulness, as if he had gathered fresh inspiration from the "gentle odors" of the "sublime tobacco."

It was not a little amusing to observe the frequency with which Mr. Thackeray, in the moments of dictation, would change his position, and I could not but think that he seemed most at his ease when one would suppose he was most uncomfortable. He was easy to "follow," as his enunciation was always clear and distinct, and he generally "weighed his words before he gave them breath," so that his amanuensis seldom received a check during the progress of his pen. He never became energetic, but spoke with that calm deliberation which distinguished his public readings; and there was one peculiarity which, among others, I especially remarked, viz., that when he made a humorous point, which inevitably caused me to laugh, his own countenance was unmoved.—GEORGE HODDER ("Memories of my Time").

[1] The writer, Mr. Hodder, was acting as Thackeray's amanuensis.

In London I visited with him the studio of Baron Marochetti. . . . The Baron, it appeared, had promised him an original wood-cut of Albert Dürer's, for whom Thackeray had a special admiration. Soon after our entrance, the sculptor took down a small engraving from the wall, saying,—

The two dragons.

"Now you have it, at last."

The subject was St. George and the Dragon. Thackeray inspected it with great delight for a few minutes: then, suddenly becoming grave, he turned to me and said,—

"I shall hang it near the head of my bed, where I can see it every morning. We all have our dragons to fight. Do you know yours? I know mine: I have not one, but two."

"What are they?" I asked.

"Indolence and Luxury!"

I could not help smiling, as I thought of the prodigious amount of literary labor he had performed, and at the same time remembered the simple comfort of his dwelling next door.

"I am serious," he continued; "I never take up the pen without an effort; I work only from necessity. I never walk out without seeing some pretty, useless thing which I want to buy. Sometimes I pass the same shop-window every day for months, and resist the temptation, and think I'm safe; then comes the day of weakness, and I yield. My physician tells me I must live very simply, and not dine out so much; but I cannot break off the agreeable habit. I shall look at this picture, and think of my dragons, though I don't expect ever to overcome them."—BAYARD TAYLOR (*Atlantic Monthly*, March, 1864).

A poor editor.

Justice compels me to say that Thackeray was not a good editor. As he would have been an indifferent public servant, an indifferent member of Parliament, so was he perfunctory as an editor. . . . Of a magazine editor it is required that he should be patient, scrupulous, judicious, but above all things hard-hearted. I think it may be doubted whether Thackeray did bring himself to read the basketfuls of manuscript with which he was deluged, but he probably did, sooner or later, read the touching little private notes by which they were accompanied—the heartrending appeals, in which he was told that if this or the other little article could be accepted and paid for, a starving family might be saved from starvation for a month. . . . He could not stand this, and the money would be sent, out of his own pocket, though the poem might be —postponed, till happily it should be lost. From such material a good editor could not be made.—ANTHONY TROLLOPE ("English Men of Letters").

Public speaking.

Thackeray was, even to his latest day, and after considerable experience, an uncertain speaker. The idea that he had to make a speech on any occasion disturbed his mind, and worked upon his nerves. . . . Sometimes he would suddenly break down: at others, his words would flow placidly from him to the end; but he never managed a peroration, nor rose to eloquence. He gossiped in his own delightful way with his audience—when he was in the mood; and when he could not do this easily, he collapsed. The set phrases, the rhetorical flights, the clap-traps of a chairmanship, were impossible

to him.—BLANCHARD JERROLD ("Best of all Good Company").

He was to lecture at Willis' Rooms,[1] in the same room where I read, and going thither before the time for his beginning, I found him standing like a forlorn disconsolate giant in the middle of the room, gazing about him. "Oh, Lord," he exclaimed, as he shook hands with me, "I'm sick at my stomach with fright." I spoke some words of encouragement to him, and was going away, but he held my hand, like a scared child, crying, "Oh, don't leave me!" "But," said I, "Thackeray, you mustn't stand here. Your audience are beginning to come in," and I drew him from the middle of his chairs and benches, which were beginning to be occupied, into the retiring-room adjoining the lecture-room, my own readings having made me perfectly familiar with both. Here he began pacing up and down, literally wringing his hands in nervous distress. "Now," said I, "what shall I do? Shall I stay with you till you begin, or shall I go, and leave you alone to collect yourself?" "Oh," he said, "if I could only get at that confounded thing" (his lecture), "to have a last look at it!" "Where is it?" said I. "Oh, in the next room on the reading-desk." "Well," said I, "if you don't like to go in and get it, I'll fetch it for you." And remembering well the position of my reading-table, which had been close to the door of the retiring-room, I darted in, hoping to snatch the manuscript without attracting the attention of the

Stage fright.

[1] He was about to deliver his first lecture upon the English humorists.

Stage fright.

audience, with which the room was already nearly full. I had been used to deliver my reading seated, at a very low table, but my friend Thackeray gave his lectures standing, and had had a reading-desk placed on the platform, adapted to his own very tall stature, so that when I came to get his manuscript it was almost above my head. Though rather disconcerted, I was determined not to go back without it, and so made a half jump, and a clutch at the book, when every leaf of it (they were not fastened together), came fluttering separately down about me. I hardly know what I did, but I think I must have gone nearly on all-fours, in my agony to gather up the scattered leaves, and retreating with them, held them out in dismay to poor Thackeray, crying, "Oh, look, look, what a dreadful thing I have done!" "My dear soul," said he, "you couldn't have done better for me. I have just a quarter of an hour to wait here, and it will take me about that to page this again, and it's the best thing in the world that could have happened." With which infinite kindness he comforted me, for I was all but crying, at having, as I thought, increased his distress and troubles. So I left him, to give the first of that brilliant course of literary historical essays with which he enchanted and instructed countless audiences in England and America. — FRANCES ANN KEMBLE ("Records of Later Life").

It is no part of this little Memorial to refer to what may be called his public relations, and his success as a lecturer. I merely record my recollection of the peculiar voice and cadence; the exquisite

manner of reading poetry ; the elocution, matchless in its simplicity ; his tranquil attitude—the only movement of his hands being when he wiped his glasses as he began and turned over the leaves of his manuscript ; his gentle intonations. There was sweet music in his way of repeating the most hackneyed lines, which freshened them anew. I seem still to hear him say,— *Reading aloud.*

"And nightly to the listening earth
Repeats the story of her birth."

—WILLIAM B. REED ("Haud Immemor").[1]

Thackeray was at that time (1853) a furious smoker, choosing the strongest cigars and despatching them in rapid succession.—ANON. (*Lippincott's Magazine*, January, 1871). *A smoker.*

One day, after we had lunched at Parker's, he handed a gold-piece to the waiter, saying, "My friend, will you do me the favor to accept a sovereign ?" "I am very much obliged to you, *Mr. Thackeray*," was the man's reply : he had not read "Vanity Fair" or "Esmond" I imagine, but he had probably tasted their author's bounty on former occasions. Yet Thackeray would sometimes be whimsically economical for others. "Don't leave this bit of paper," he would say to a visitor who was laying down a card on the table ; "it has cost you two cents, and will be just as good for your next call."—ANON. (*Lippincott's Magazine*, January, 1871). *Giving—Saving.*

[1] Reed (William Bradford). Haud Immemor. A Few Personal Recollections of Mr. Thackeray in Philadelphia. (Privately printed.) 8vo. Philadelphia, 1864.

Indifference to natural scenery.

Mr. Thackeray, like Dr. Johnson—and all the ancients—was singularly indifferent to the beauties of natural scenery, and took more pleasure in contemplating the restless tide of human life in the streets of London, than in looking at or wandering among the most glorious panoramic splendors of mountain or forest.—CHARLES MACKAY ("Forty Years' Recollections").

Observation of character.

One of the most comical and interesting occasions I remember, in connection with Thackeray, was going with him to a grand concert given fifteen or twenty years ago by Madame Sontag. We sat near an entrance door in the hall, and every one who came in, male and female, Thackeray pretended to know, and gave each one a name and brief chronicle, as the presence flitted by. It was in Boston, and as he had been in town only a day or two, and knew only half a dozen people in it, the biographies were most amusing. As I happened to know several people who passed, it was droll enough to hear this great master of character give them their dues. Mr. Choate moved along in his regal, affluent manner. The large style of the man, so magnificent and yet so modest, at once arrested Thackeray's attention, and he forebore to place him in his extemporaneous catalogue. I remember a pallid, sharp-faced girl fluttering past, and how Thackeray exulted in the history of this "frail little bit of porcelain," as he called her. There was something in her manner that made him hate her, and he insisted that she had murdered somebody on her way to the hall. Altogether this marvellous prelude to

the concert made a deep impression on Thackeray's one listener, into whose ear he whispered his fatal insinuations. There is one man still living and moving about the streets I walk in occasionally, whom I never encounter without almost a shudder, remembering as I do the unerring shaft which Thackeray sent that night into the unknown man's character.—JAMES T. FIELDS ("Yesterdays with Authors").

Observation of character.

He was always versifying. He once owed me five pounds seventeen shillings and sixpence, his share of a dinner-bill at Richmond. He sent me a check for the amount in rhyme, giving the proper financial document on the second half of a sheet of note-paper. . . . This was all trifling, the reader will say. No doubt. Thackeray was always trifling, and yet always serious. In attempting to understand his character it is necessary for you to bear within your own mind the idea that he was always, within his own bosom, encountering melancholy with buffoonery, and meanness with satire. The very spirit of burlesque dwelt within him—a spirit which does not see the grand the less because of the travesties which it is always engendering.—ANTHONY TROLLOPE ("English Men of Letters").

Always trifling, yet always serious.

He was fond of telling how on one occasion, at Paris, he found himself in a great crowded *salon;* and looking from the one end across the sea of heads, being in Swift's place of calm in a crowd ("an inch or two above it"), he saw at the other end a strange visage, staring at him with an expression

Melancholy

Melancholy.

of comical woebegoneness. After a little he found that this rueful being was himself in the mirror. He was not, indeed, morose. He was alive to and thankful for every-day blessings, great and small; for the happiness of home, for friendship, for wit, for music, for beauty of all kinds, for the pleasures of the "faithful old gold pen;" now running into some felicitous expression, now playing itself into some droll initial letter; nay, even for the creature comforts. But his persistent state, especially for the later half of his life, was profoundly *morne*, —there is no other word for it. This arose in part from temperament, from a quick sense of the littleness and wretchedness of mankind. . . . In part, too, this melancholy was the result of private calamities. . . . The loss of his second child in infancy was always an abiding sorrow. . . . A yet keener and more constantly present affliction was the illness of his wife. . . . After some years of marriage, Mrs. Thackeray caught a fever, brought on by imprudent exposure at a time when the effects of such ailments are more than usually lasting both on the system and the nerves. She never afterwards recovered so as to be able to be with her husband and children. But she has been from the first intrusted to the good offices of a kind family, tenderly cared for, surrounded with every comfort by his unwearied affection.—Dr. John Brown ("Spare Hours").

Domestic afflictions.

Of Thackeray's married life what need be said shall be contained in a very few words. It was grievously unhappy; but the misery of it came from

God, and was in no wise due to human fault. She became ill, and her mind failed her. There was a period during which he would not believe that her illness was more than illness, and then he clung to her and waited on her with an assiduity of affection which only made his task the more painful to him. At last it became evident that she should live in the companionship of some one with whom her life might be altogether quiet, and she has since been domiciled with a lady with whom she has been happy. Thus she was, after but a few years of married life, taken away from him, and he became, as it were, a widower till the end of his days.—ANTHONY TROLLOPE ("English Men of Letters"). *Domestic afflictions.*

Thackeray was a man of aristocratic feelings, and the last person in the world to be *hail fellow well met* with every one who chose to accost him. A touch on the shoulder from a railway conductor—after the manner of those "gentlemanly" officials—made the blood tingle in his finger-ends, and left a feeling of indignation which burned anew as he recounted the occurrence. He demanded civil treatment, but hauteur or condescension was not in his disposition. Standing in no awe of the highest, he had no wish to inspire awe in the lowest.—ANON. (*Lippincott's Magazine*, January, 1871). *Manly self-respect.*

He was of much too healthy a mind to fear to walk about in his habit as he lived in private, and he never shrouded himself in mysteries, nor broke upon us, at stated seasons, in a blaze of glory. *Simple, natural, and frank*

Simple, natural, and frank.

Simple, natural, and a gentleman, he was ever as frank as those who live in good society are usually found. But his great griefs he kept to himself, and would have instantly recoiled from the idea of making money or fame by a revelation of the pulsations of a troubled heart. Hence, his outside life having been without adventure, and his inner life a secret between his Maker and himself, his biographer has little to tell save what all know.—SHIRLEY BROOKS (*Illustrated London News*, January 9, 1864).

Like Hawthorne, in bearing and manner.

Hawthorne's figure and air has been described as "modestly grand:" and the observation, it occurs to me, applies exactly to Thackeray. Indeed I have often been struck with the idea that the two men must have affected society much in the same way, and by the same mental and physical qualities. . . . In their solitude, when suddenly observed, both had a sad, a grave aspect: and each was "marvellously moved to fun" on occasions. . . . It was with Thackeray as with Hawthorne. The grand, sad mask could pucker in a moment, and break into hearty fun and laughter. A friend went laughing into the Reform Club one afternoon; he had just met Thackeray at the door of the Athenæum Club. He had had a dispute with his cabman about the fare, which he had just proposed to settle by a toss. If Thackeray won, the cabman was to receive two shillings, and if the toss went against the author of "Vanity Fair," the cabman was to receive one shilling. Fortune was with the novelist; and he dwelt delightfully afterwards on the gentlemanly manner in which the driver took

his defeat.—BLANCHARD JERROLD ("The Best of all Good Company").

There were few whom he allowed to *know* him, in the true sense of the phrase—that is to say, there was a constitutional reserve in his manner, accompanied, at times, by a cold austerity. . . . Douglas Jerrold, dating his acquaintance with Thackeray from the time that the latter, by some curious hazard, illustrated his book of "Men of Character," was often heard to say, "I have known Thackeray eighteen years, and I don't know him yet."—GEORGE HODDER ("Memories of My Time"). *Reserve.*

There were times, and many, when Thackeray could not break through his outward austerity, even when passing an intimate friend in the street. I and a mutual friend met him one afternoon in Fleet Street, ambling to Whitefriars on his cob, and a very extraordinary figure he made. He caught sight of us, and my companion was about to grasp his hand, but he just touched his hat with his finger, and without opening his lips or relaxing the solemn cast of his features, he passed on. My companion stamped his foot upon the pavement and cried, "Who would think that we were up till four o'clock this morning together, and that he sang his 'Reverend Doctor Luther,' and was the liveliest of us?" —BLANCHARD JERROLD ("The Best of all Good Company").

When a subject was seriously discussed he could talk gravely, though with diminished fire, and was

Reticence.

apt, when pressed, to have recourse to banter. I doubt whether any one ever induced him to say much about matters of religious belief or feeling.—ANON. (*Lippincott's Magazine*, January, 1871).

His own view of death.

I never feel pity for a man dying, only for survivors, if there be such passionately deploring him. You see the pleasures the undersigned proposes to himself here in future years—a sight of the Alps, a holiday on the Rhine, a ride in the Park, a colloquy with pleasant friends of an evening. If it is death to part with these delights (and pleasures they are and no mistake) sure the mind can conceive others afterwards; and I know one small philosopher who is quite ready to give up these pleasures; quite content (after a pang or two of separation from dear friends here) to put his hand into that of the summoning angel, and say, "Lead on, O messenger of God our Father, to the next place whither the divine goodness calls us!" We must be blindfolded before we can pass, I know; but I have no fear about what is to come, any more than my children need fear that the love of *their* father should fail them. I thought myself a dead man once, and protest the notion gave me no disquiet about myself—at least, the philosophy is more comfortable than that which is tinctured with brimstone.—W. M. THACKERAY (From a letter quoted in "Haud Immemor").

His sense of a higher Power, his reverence and godly fear, is felt more than expressed—as indeed it mainly should always be—in everything he wrote.

It comes out at times quite suddenly, and stops at once, in its full strength. . . . In ordinary intercourse the same sudden "*Te Deum*" would occur, always brief and intense, like lightning from a cloudless heaven ; he seemed almost ashamed—not of it, but of his giving it expression. *Reverence.*

We cannot resist here recalling one Sunday evening in December, when he was walking with two friends along the Dean road, to the west of Edinburgh,—one of the noblest outlets to any city. It was a lovely evening,—such a sunset as one never forgets ; a rich dark bar of cloud hovered over the sun, going down behind the Highland hills, lying bathed in amethystine bloom ; between this cloud and the hills there was a narrow slip of the pure ether, of a tender cowslip color, lucid, and as if it were the very body of heaven in its clearness ; every object standing out as if etched upon the sky. The northwest end of Corstorphine Hill, with its trees and rocks, lay in the heart of this pure radiance, and there a wooden crane, used in the quarry below, was so placed as to assume the figure of a cross ; there it was, unmistakeable, lifted up against the crystalline sky. All three gazed at it silently. As they gazed, he gave utterance in a tremulous, gentle, and rapid voice, to what all were feeling, in the word "CALVARY!" The friends walked on in silence, and then turned to other things. All that evening he was very gentle and serious, speaking, as he seldom did, of divine things,—of death, of sin, of eternity, of salvation, expressing his simple faith in God and in his Saviour.—DR. JOHN BROWN ("Spare Hours").

Reverence.

The foregoing reminiscence by Dr. Brown, may be supplemented by a letter of Thackeray's to the Rev. Joseph Sortain, printed in the *North British Review*, November, 1862 :—

"My dear Sir,—I shall value your book very much, not only as the work of the most accomplished orator I have ever heard in my life, but, if you will let me so take it, as a token of good-will and interest on your part in my own literary pursuits. I want, too, to say in my way, that love and truth are the greatest of Heaven's commandments and blessings to us ; that the best of us, the many especially who pride themselves on their virtue most, are wretchedly weak, vain, and selfish ; and to preach such a charity at least as a common sense of our shame and unworthiness might inspire, in us poor people. I hope men of my profession do no harm, who talk this doctrine out of doors to people in drawing-rooms and in the world. Your duty in church takes them a step higher, that awful step beyond ethics which leads up to God's revealed truth. What a tremendous responsibility his who has that mystery to explain ! What a boon the faith which makes it clear to him ! I am glad to have kind thoughts from you, and to have the opportunity of offering you my sincere respects and regard.—Believe me, most truly yours, my dear Sir,

"W. M. Thackeray."

In one of our many conversations I mentioned to him the objections urged by an accomplished lady friend of mine to his assignment of good, generous Colonel Newcome, at the close of his noble life, to

the foundation of the hospital within the precincts of which his boyish days had been passed. . . . The lady thought it a shame to bring such a man to what she thought a sort of degradation. "Then," said Thackeray, with more than usual earnestness of manner—"then she is not a Christian!" This was in itself as much a profession of faith as if he had written volumes in defense of it.—GEORGE LUNT (*Harper's Magazine*, January, 1877).

"Then she is not a Christian."

Much of his light talk was intended, not so much to conceal as to keep down a sensibility amounting almost to womanliness which belonged to his nature, and which contrasted, one might almost say, struggled, with the manliness which was equally its characteristic. He could not read any thing pathetic without actual discomfort. . . . His well-known sensitiveness sprang perhaps from the same root as his sensibility. . . . His sensitiveness made harsh things distasteful to him even when he was not himself the object of them. "You fiend!" he said to a friend who was laughing over a sharp attack on an acquaintance of both, and refused to hear or read a word of it.—ANON. (*Lippincott's Magazine*, January, 1871).

Sensibility.

One day, while the great novel of *The Newcomes* was in course of publication, Lowell, who was then in London, met Thackeray on the street. The novelist was serious in manner, and his looks and voice told of weariness and affliction. He saw the kindly inquiry in the poet's eyes, and said, "Come into Evans's, and I'll tell you all about it. *I have killed*

"I have killed the Colonel."

the Colonel." So they walked in and took a table in a remote corner, and then Thackeray, drawing the fresh sheets of MS. from his breast pocket, read through that exquisitely touching chapter which records the death of Colonel Newcome. When he came to the final *Adsum*, the tears which had been swelling his lids for some time trickled down his face, and the last word was almost an inarticulate sob.—FRANCIS HENRY UNDERWOOD (*Harper's Magazine*, January, 1881).

"I have killed the Colonel."

On his return to Philadelphia, in the spring of 1856, from the south and west, a number of his friends—I as much as any one—urged him, unwisely as it turned out, to repeat his lectures on "The Humorists." He was very loath to do it, but finally yielded, being, I doubt not, somewhat influenced by the pecuniary inducements accidentally held out to him. A young bookseller of this city offered him a round sum—not very large, but, under the circumstances, quite liberal for the course—which he accepted. The experiment was a failure. It was late in the season, with long days and shortening nights, and the course *was* a stale one, and the lectures had been printed, and the audiences were thin, and the bargain was disastrous, not to him but to the young gentleman who had ventured it. We were all disappointed and mortified; but Thackeray took it good-humoredly; the only thing that seemed to disturb him being his sympathy with the man of business. "I don't mind the empty benches, but I cannot bear to see that sad, pale-faced young man as I come out, who is losing money on my account."

The cynic in a business transaction.

This he used to say at my house when he came home to a frugal and not very cheerful supper after the lecture. Still the bargain had been fairly made, and was honorably complied with; and the money was paid and remitted, through my agency, to him at New York. I received no acknowledgement of the remittance, and recollect well that I felt not a little annoyed at this; the more so, when, on picking up a newspaper, I learned that Thackeray had sailed for home. The day after he had gone, when there could be no refusal, I received a certificate of deposit on his New York bankers for an amount quite sufficient to meet any loss incurred, as he thought, on his behalf. I give the accompanying note, merely suppressing the name of the gentleman in question. There are some little things in this note—its blanks and dashes—to which a fac-simile alone would do justice :—

The cynic in a business transaction.

"*April* 24.

"My Dear Reed,—When you get this, . . . remum-mum-ember me to kick-kick-kind ffu-fffu-ffriends. . . . a sudden resolution—to—mum-mum-morrow. . . . in the Bu-bu-baltic.

A farewell letter.

"Good-by, my dear kind friend, and all kind friends in Philadelphia. I didn't think of going away when I left home this morning; but it's the best way.

"I think it is best to send back 25 per cent. to poor ——. Will you kindly give him the inclosed; and depend upon it I shall go and see Mrs. Booth when I go to London, and tell her all about you. My heart is uncommonly heavy; and I am yours gratefully and affectionately. "W. M. T."

And thus, with an act and words of kindness, he left America, never to return!—WILLIAM B. REED ("Haud Immemor.").

Delight in boys.

He had a particular delight in boys, and an excellent way with them. I remember his once asking me with fantastic gravity, when he had been to Eton where my eldest son then was, whether I felt as he did in regard of never seeing a boy without wanting instantly to give him a sovereign?—CHARLES DICKENS (*Cornhill Magazine*, February, 1864).

The cynic among children.

He used to come to my house, not the abode of wealth or luxury, almost every day, and often more than once a day. He talked with my little children, and told them odd fairy tales; and I now see him . . . one day in Walnut Street walking slowly along with my little girl by the hand—the tall, gray-haired, spectacled man with an effort accommodating himself to the toddling child by his side; and then he would bring her home; and one day when we were to have a great dinner at the club given to him, and my wife was ill, and my household disarranged, and the bell rang, and I said to him, "I must go and carve the boiled mutton for the children, and take for granted you do not care to come;" and he got up, and with a cheery voice said, "I love boiled mutton, and children too, and I will dine with them," and we did; and he was happy, and the children were happy, and our appetite for the club dinner was damaged. Such was Thackeray in my home.—WILLIAM B. REED ("Haud Immemor.").

Overhearing me say one morning something about the vast attractions of London to a greenhorn like myself, he broke in with, "Yes, but you have not seen the grandest one yet! Go with me to-day to St. Paul's and hear the charity children sing." So we went, and I saw the "head cynic of literature," the "hater of humanity," as a critical dunce in the *Times* once called him, hiding his bowed face, wet with tears, while his whole frame shook with emotion, as the children of poverty rose to pour out their anthems of praise.—JAMES T. FIELDS ("Yesterdays with Authors"). *The charity children.*

It has been said of Thackeray that he was a cynic. This has been said so generally, that the charge against him has become proverbial. . . . If he wrote as a cynic . . . it may be fair that he who is to be known as a writer should be so called. But, as a man, I protest that it would be hard to find an individual further removed from the character. Over and outside his fancy, which was the gift which made him so remarkable—a certain feminine softness was the most remarkable trait about him. To give some immediate pleasure was the great delight of his life—a sovereign to a schoolboy, gloves to a girl, a dinner to a man, a compliment to a woman. *Generosity.*

His charity was overflowing. His generosity excessive. I heard once a story of woe from a man who was the dear friend of both of us. The gentleman wanted a large sum of money instantly—something under two thousand pounds—had no natural friends who could provide it, but must go

Generosity.

utterly to the wall without it. Pondering over this sad condition of things just revealed to me, I met Thackeray . . . and told him the story. "Do you mean to say that I am to find two thousand pounds?" he said angrily, with some expletives. I explained that I had not even suggested the doing of anything—only that we might discuss the matter. Then there came over his face a peculiar smile, and a wink in his eye, and he whispered his suggestion, as though half ashamed of his meanness. "I'll go half," he said, "if anybody will do the rest." And he did go half, at a day or two's notice. . . . I could tell various stories of the same kind.—ANTHONY TROLLOPE ("English Men of Letters").

Like many other generous men, he had always a few pounds floating about among friends and acquaintances whom he had been able to oblige in their necessity, and whenever he received back money which he had lent, he did not put it into his pocket with a glow of satisfaction at having added so much to his exchequer; but congratulated himself that he could transfer the same sum to another person who he knew was in need of it.—GEORGE HODDER ("Memories of My Time").

A morning call.

I was one morning at Horace Mayhew's chambers in Regent Street when Thackeray knocked at the door, and cried from without—"It's no use, Horry Mayhew: open the door."

"It's dear old Thackeray," said Mayhew, instinctively putting chairs and tables in order, to do honor

to the friend of whom he never spoke without pride. . . . Thackeray came in, saying cheerily—"Well, young gentlemen, you'll admit an old fogy."

A morning call.

He always spoke of himself as an old man. Between him and Mayhew there were not many years. He took up the papers lying about, talked the gossip of the day, and then suddenly said—with his hat in his hand—"I was going away without doing part of the business of my visit. You spoke the other day at the dinner (the *Punch* weekly meeting) of poor George. Somebody—most unaccountably—has returned me a five pound note I lent him a long time ago. I didn't expect it:—so just hand it to George: and tell him, when his pocket will bear it, just to pass it on to some poor fellow of his acquaintance. By-bye." A nod and he was gone.

This was, we all agreed, very like "dear old Thackeray." — BLANCHARD JERROLD ("Best of all Good Company").

Anthony Trollope's estimate.

I regard him as one of the most tender-hearted human beings I ever knew, who, with an exaggerated contempt for the foibles of the world at large, would entertain an almost equally exaggerated sympathy with the joys and troubles of individuals around him. He had been unfortunate in early life—unfortunate in regard to money—unfortunate with an afflicted wife—unfortunate in having his home broken up before his children were fit to be his companions. This threw him much upon clubs, and taught him to dislike general society. But it never affected his heart, or clouded his

imagination. — ANTHONY TROLLOPE ("Autobiography").[1]

Benevolence —Honesty.

We know of no death in the world of letters since Macaulay's which will make so many mourners,— for he was a faithful friend. No one, we believe, will ever know the amount of true kindness and help, given often at a time when kindness cost much, to nameless, unheard-of suffering. A man of spotless honor, of the strongest possible home affections, of the most scrupulous truthfulness of observation and of word, we may use for him his own words to his "faithful old gold pen:"

> "Nor pass the words as idle phrases by;
> Stranger! I never writ a flattery,
> Nor signed the pen that registered a lie."

—DR. JOHN BROWN ("Spare Hours").

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